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HAUNTED HORROR™

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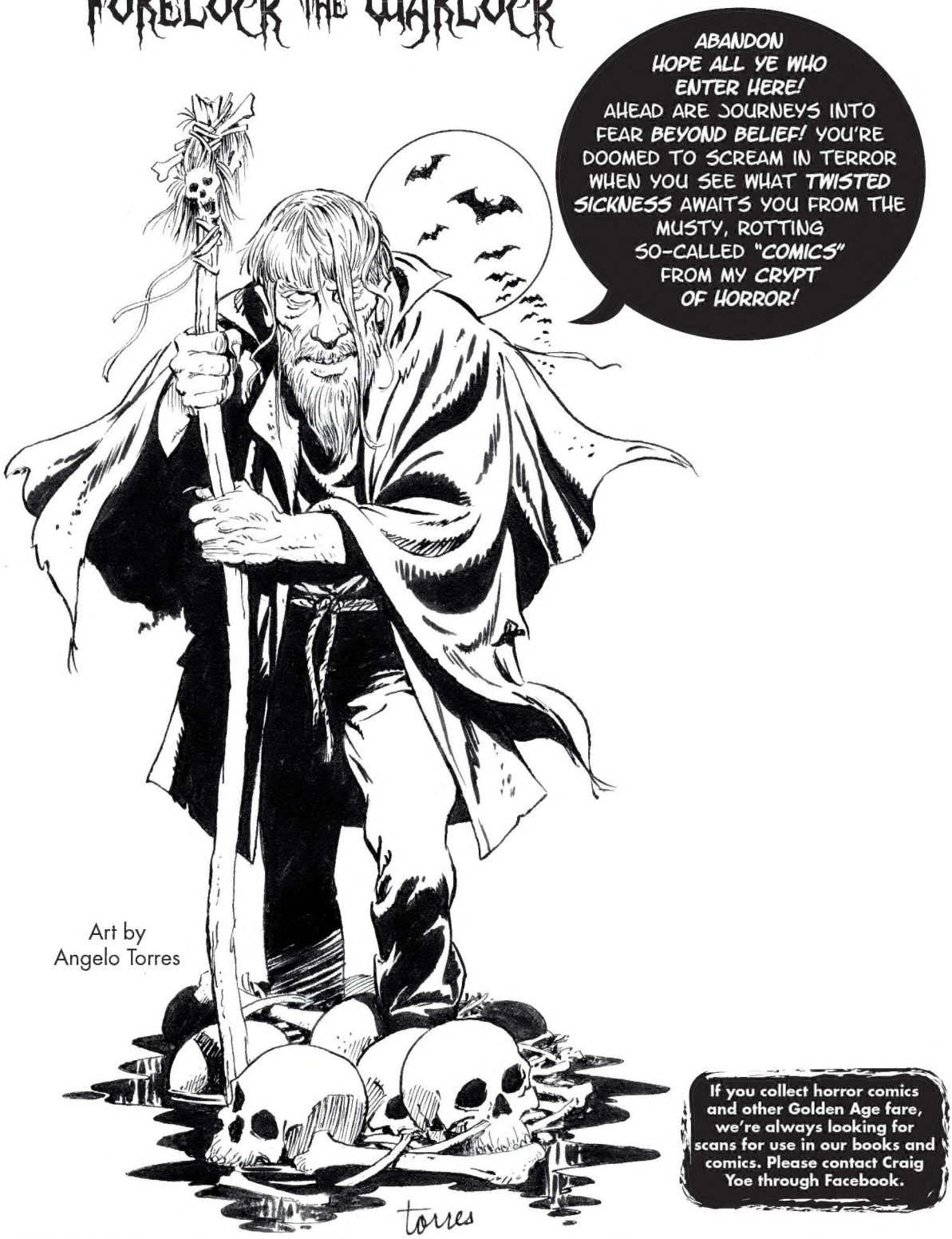
BLOODY DISGUSTING

FORELOCK THE WARLOCK


ABANDON HOPE ALL YE WHO ENTER HERE! AHEAD ARE JOURNEYS INTO FEAR BEYOND BELIEF! YOU'RE DOOMED TO SCREAM IN TERROR WHEN YOU SEE WHAT TWISTED SICKNESS AWAITS YOU FROM THE MUSTY, ROTTING SO-CALLED "COMICS" FROM MY CRYPT OF HORROR!
torres

Art by
Angelo Torres

If you collect horror comics and other Golden Age fare, we're always looking for scans for use in our books and comics. Please contact Craig Yoe through Facebook.

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On the cover, *Mister Mystery* #8, November 1952. Pencils attributed to Tony Mortellaro; inks attributed to Bernard Baily.

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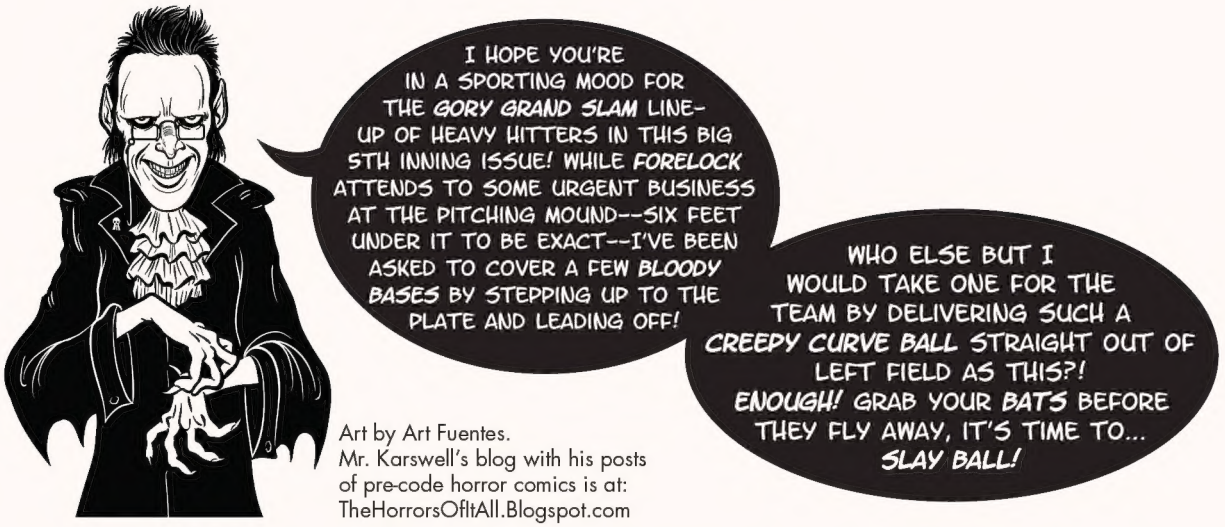
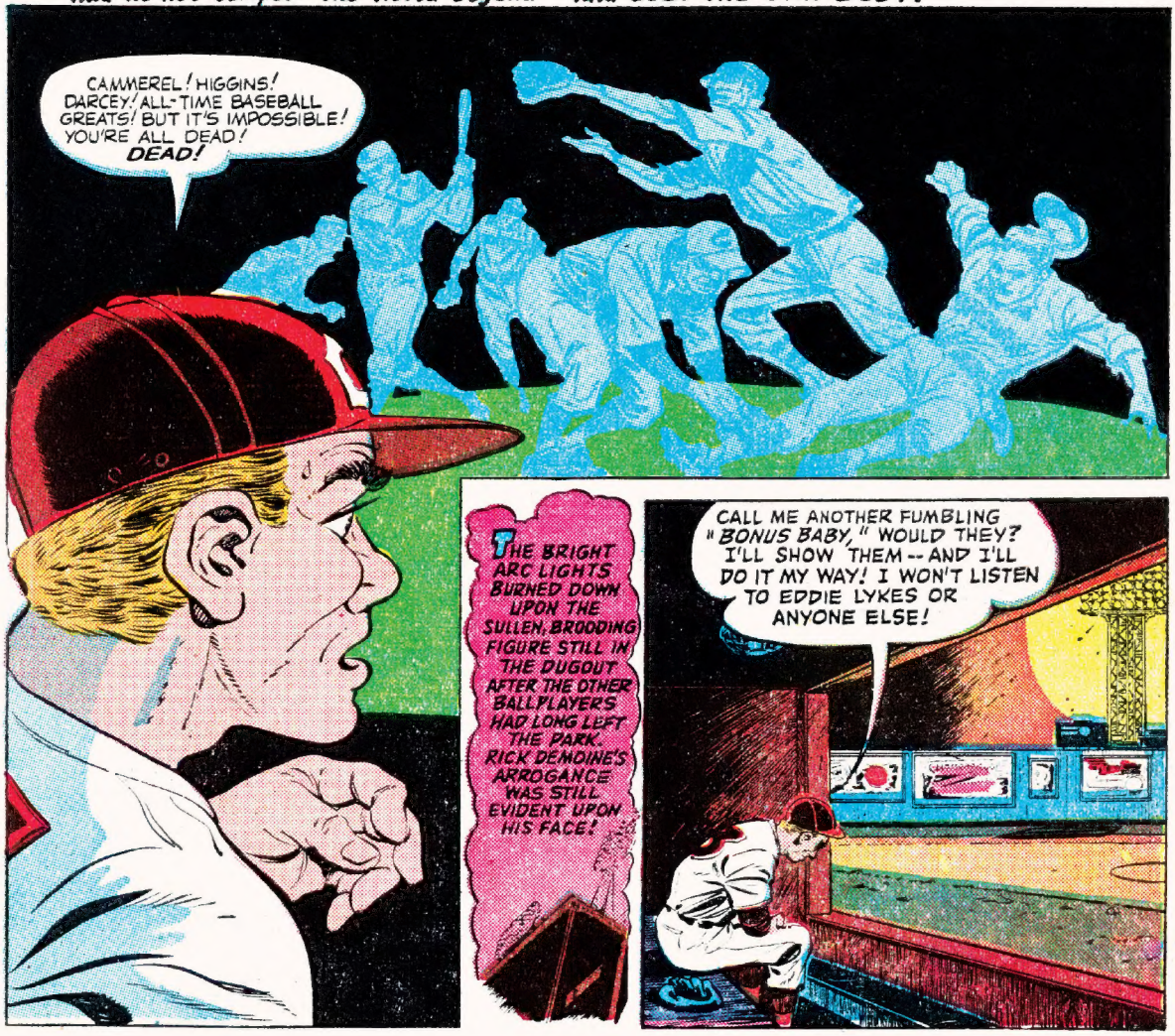

I HOPE YOU'RE IN A SPORTING MOOD FOR THE GORY GRAND SLAM LINE-UP OF HEAVY HITTERS IN THIS BIG 5TH INNING ISSUE! WHILE FORELOCK ATTENDS TO SOME URGENT BUSINESS AT THE PITCHING MOUND--SIX FEET UNDER IT TO BE EXACT--I'VE BEEN ASKED TO COVER A FEW BLOODY BASES BY STEPPING UP TO THE PLATE AND LEADING OFF!
WHO ELSE BUT I WOULD TAKE ONE FOR THE TEAM BY DELIVERING SUCH A CREEPY CURVE BALL STRAIGHT OUT OF LEFT FIELD AS THIS?! ENOUGH! GRAB YOUR BATS BEFORE THEY FLY AWAY, IT'S TIME TO... SLAY BALL!

Art by Art Fuentes.
Mr. Karswell's blog with his posts of pre-code horror comics is at: TheHorrorsOfItAll.Blogspot.com

The Man Who Lost His Body

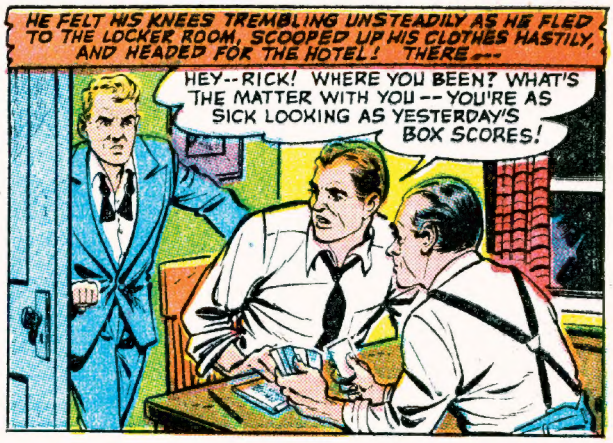
RICK DEMOINE! *A lot of people who follow the baseball sport pages remember the name! All agreed that he would have been the most outstanding player of all time-- had he not tempted the world beyond -- and* ***LOST HIS OWN BODY!***

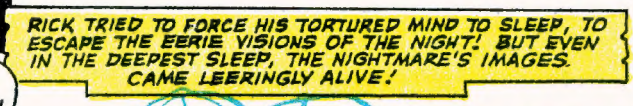

CAMMEREL! HIGGINS! DARCEY! ALL-TIME BASEBALL GREATS! BUT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! YOU'RE ALL DEAD! DEAD!
THE BRIGHT ARC LIGHTS BURNED DOWN UPON THE SULLEN, BROODING FIGURE STILL IN THE DUGOUT AFTER THE OTHER BALLPLAYERS HAD LONG LEFT THE PARK. RICK DEMOINE'S ARROGANCE WAS STILL EVIDENT UPON HIS FACE!
CALL ME ANOTHER FUMBLING "BONUS BABY," WOULD THEY? I'LL SHOW THEM -- AND I'LL DO IT MY WAY! I WON'T LISTEN TO EDDIE LYKES OR ANYONE ELSE!

Worlds of Fear #4, May 1952. Artist: Bob Powell.

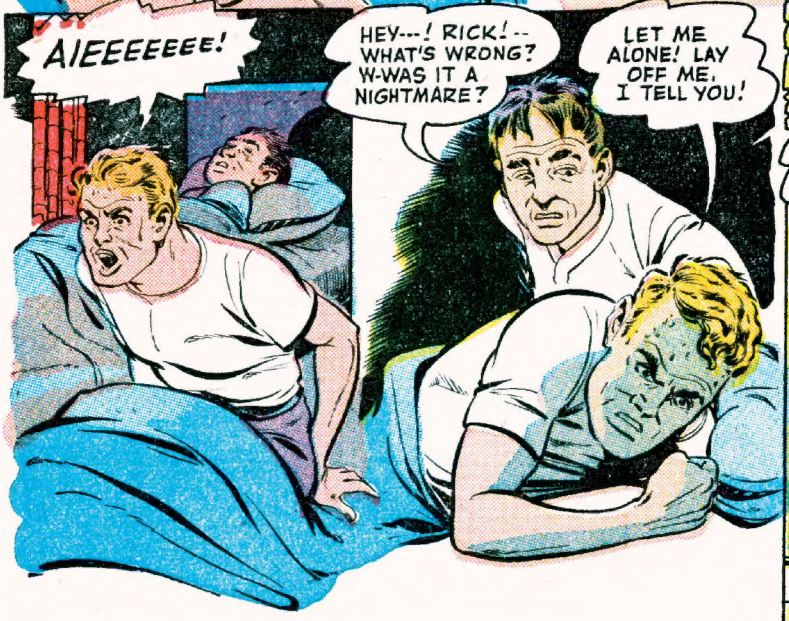
HIS RESENTFUL MIND WENT BACK OVER THE INCIDENT EARLIER IN THE EVENING, WHEN THE TEAM MANAGER, EDDIE LYKES, YANKED HIM IN THE CRUCIAL MOMENT OF THE BALLGAME!
YOU'RE A SHOWOFF, KID! YOU'RE TRYING TO IMPRESS THE CROWD WITH YOUR FIREBALL! YOU GOT TO CONCENTRATE ON CONTROL -- PITCH FOR THE TEAM!
AS THE SNIDE WORDS WERE RECALLED, RICK STOOD UP, AND WITH CLENCHED FIST STRUCK FRUSTRATEDLY INTO THE CATCHER'S MITT ON THE BENCH!
I--I'LL SHOW--- UH! THE LIGHTS WENT OUT!
WHUP!
THE PARK MUST BE CLOSING DOWN! W-WHAT'S THAT -- ON THE FIELD?
SUDDENLY -- RICK RUBBED HIS EYES! THERE ON THE DIAMOND, IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT, HE SAW ---
STRANGE SPECTRAL FIGURES PLAYING A BALLGAME!
OH, NO! THEY'RE THE BASEBALL GREATS RIGHT OUT OF BASEBALL'S HALL OF FAME! B-BUT THEY'RE DEAD!
SPLUNKCH!
THE SUDDEN SPLITTING OF THE BAT ROUSED RICK FROM HIS STUNNED IMMOBILITY!
UUHHH!

GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE!
BRICKS

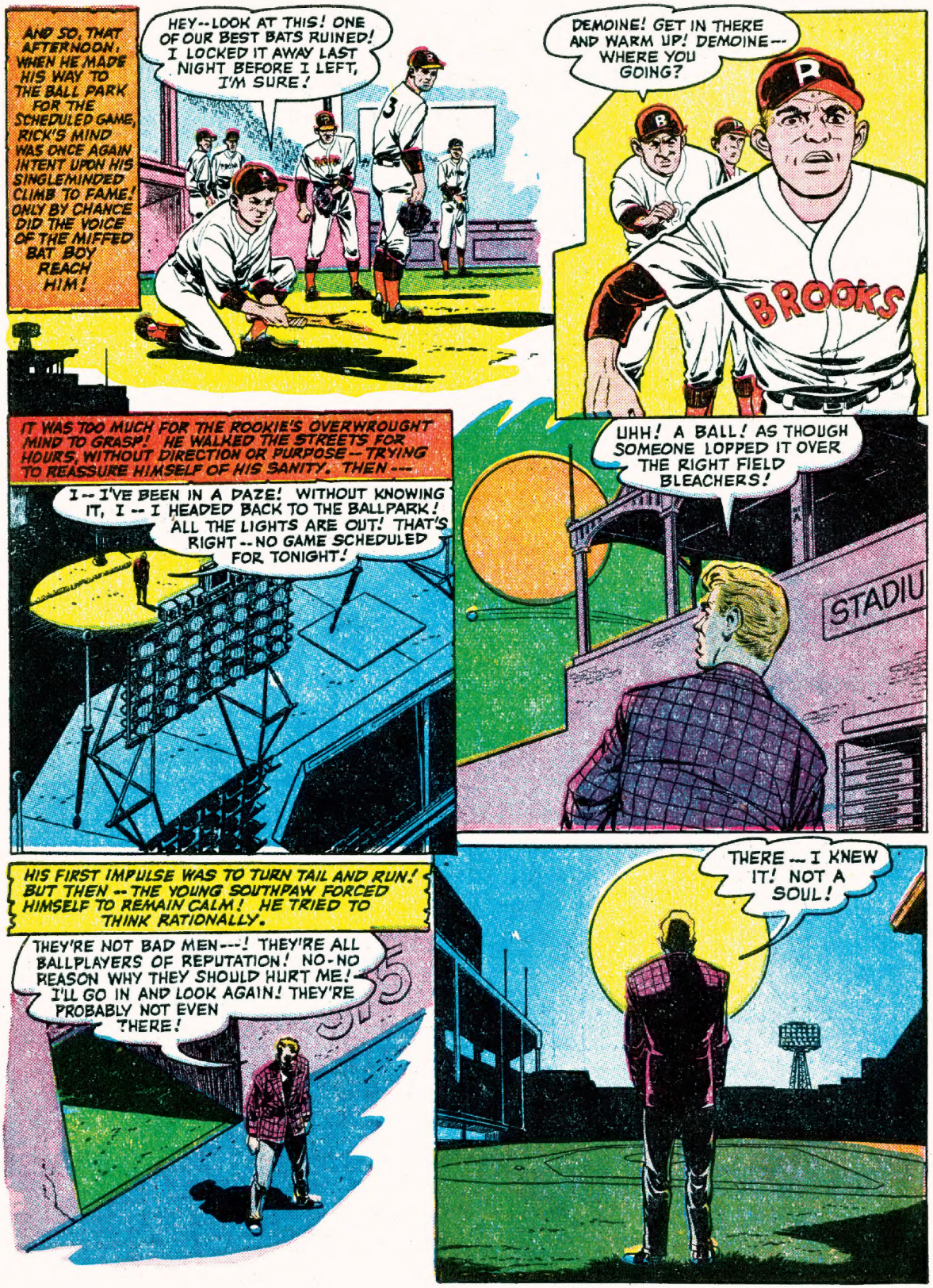

HE FELT HIS KNEES TREMBLING UNSTEADILY AS HE FLED TO THE LOCKER ROOM, SCOOPED UP HIS CLOTHES HASTILY, AND HEADED FOR THE HOTEL! THERE---
HEY--RICK! WHERE YOU BEEN? WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU -- YOU'RE AS SICK LOOKING AS YESTERDAY'S BOX SCORES!

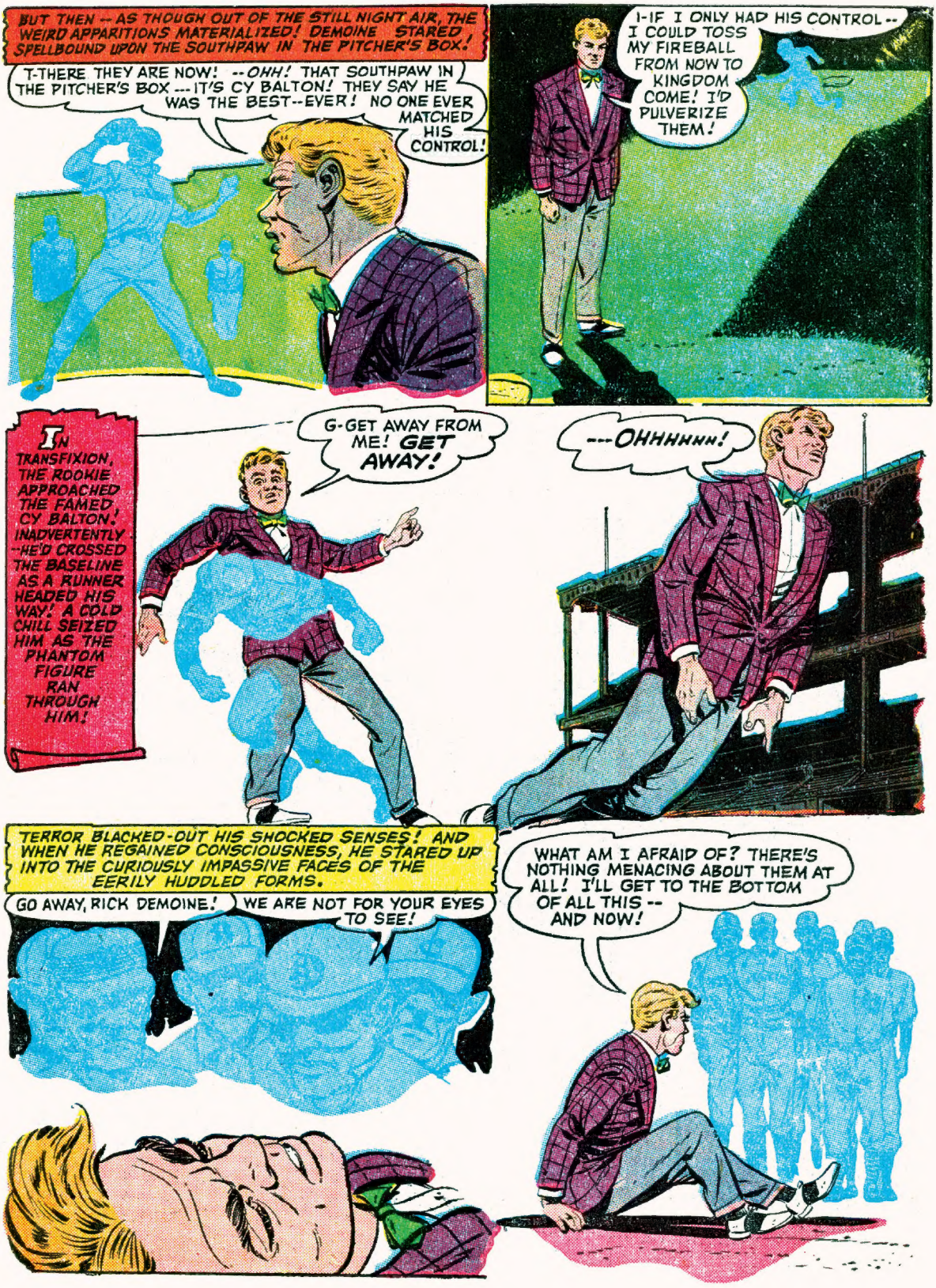

RICK TRIED TO FORCE HIS TORTURED MIND TO SLEEP, TO ESCAPE THE EERIE VISIONS OF THE NIGHT! BUT EVEN IN THE DEEPEST SLEEP, THE NIGHTMARE'S IMAGES CAME LEERINGLY ALIVE!

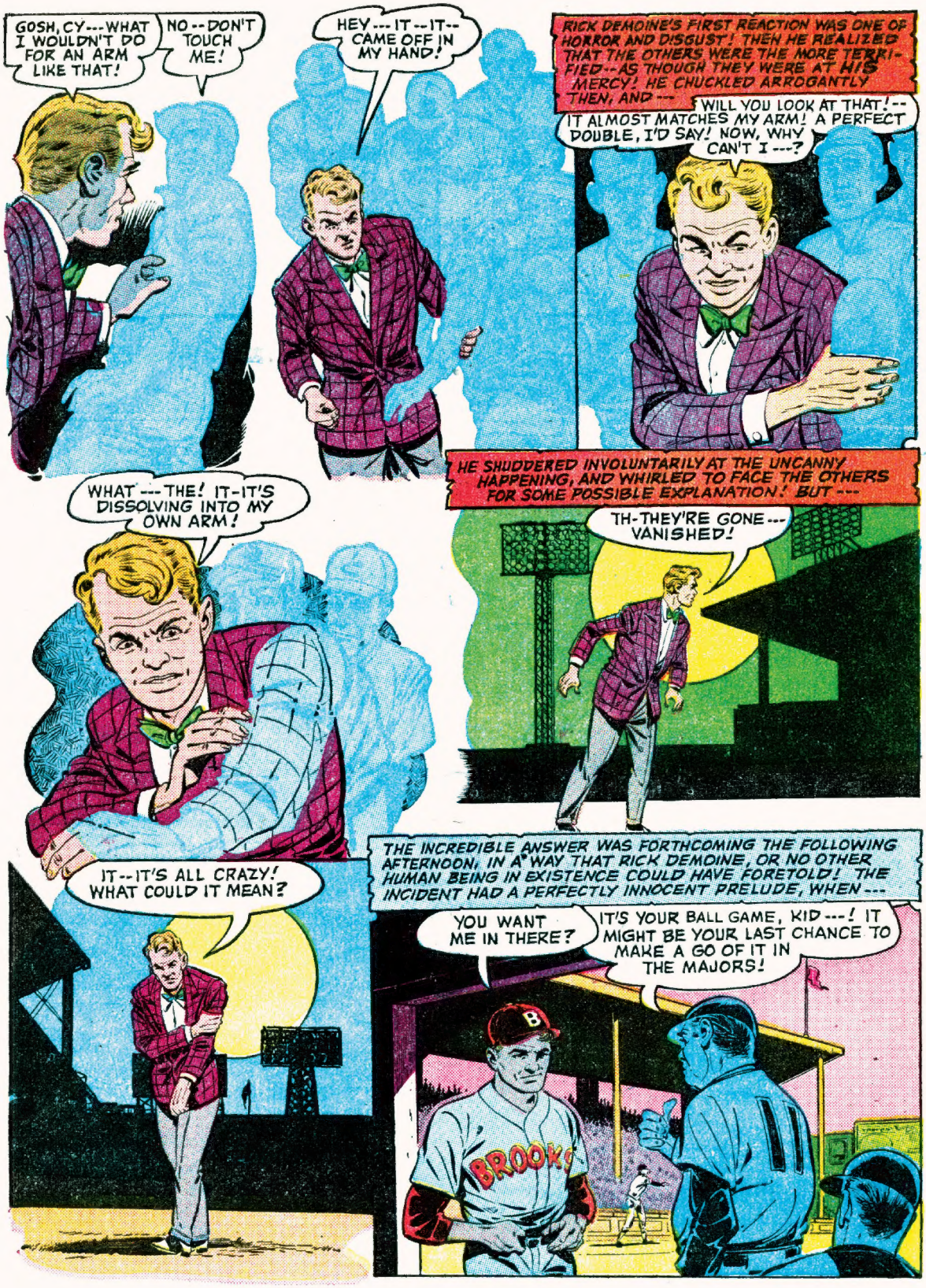
HOW DO YOU LIKE THAT GUY? HE DOESN'T EVEN ANSWER YOU! -- A REAL PRIMA DONNA!
BEING YANKED TONIGHT PROBABLY HIT HIM REAL HARD! HE'S KIND OF TOUCHY, ANYWAY!

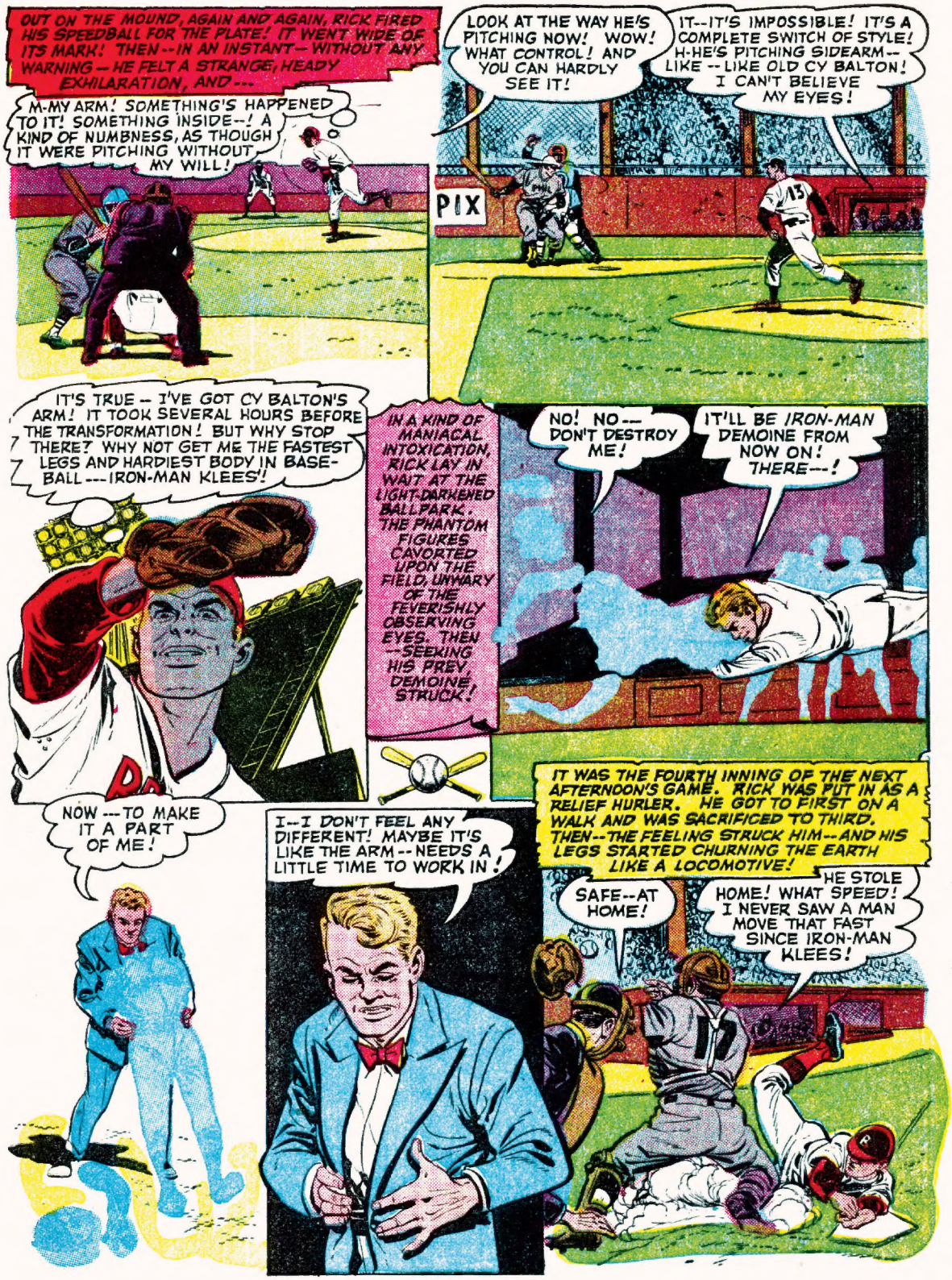

AIEEEEEEE!
HEY---! RICK! -- WHAT'S WRONG? W-WAS IT A NIGHTMARE?
LET ME ALONE! LAY OFF ME, I TELL YOU!

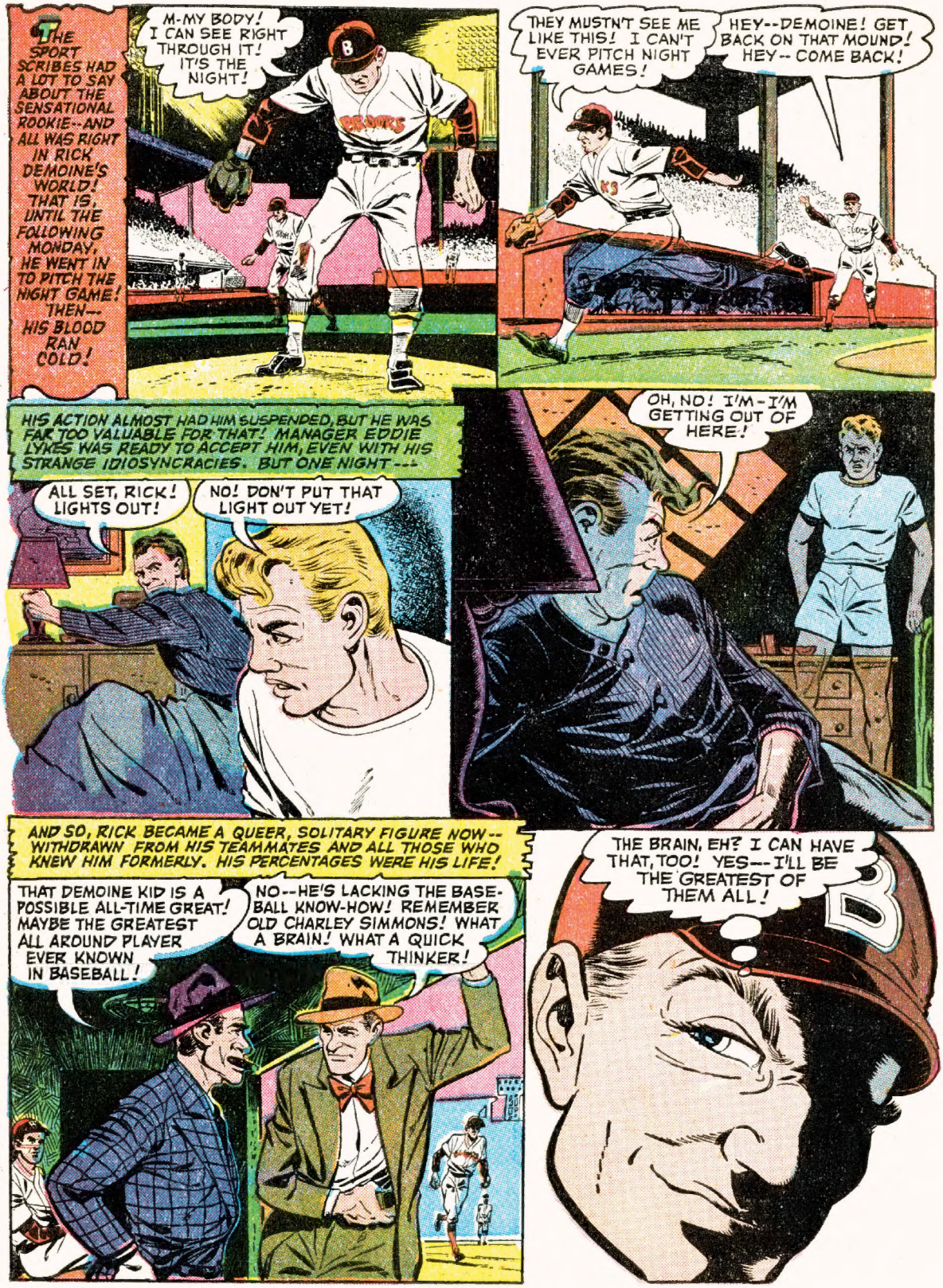
HE WAS AFRAID TO TRUST HIS WANDERING MIND TO SLEEP AGAIN -- BUT HE SUCCUMBED TO WEARINESS PRESENTLY. AND IN THE BRIGHT MORNING LIGHT, THE SHADOWS OF THE NIGHT HAD STRANGELY FADED.
I WAS TIRED--UPSET! IT WAS THE STRAIN OF LOSING THAT GAME IN THE FIERCE HEAT! YES -- IT WAS ONLY A DREAM!


AND SO, THAT AFTERNOON, WHEN HE MADE HIS WAY TO THE BALL PARK FOR THE SCHEDULED GAME, RICK'S MIND WAS ONCE AGAIN INTENT UPON HIS SINGLEMINDED CLIMB TO FAME! ONLY BY CHANCE DID THE VOICE OF THE MIFFED BAT BOY REACH HIM!
HEY--LOOK AT THIS! ONE OF OUR BEST BATS RUINED! I LOCKED IT AWAY LAST NIGHT BEFORE I LEFT, I'M SURE!
DEMOINE! GET IN THERE AND WARM UP! DEMOINE--WHERE YOU GOING?
BROOKS
IT WAS TOO MUCH FOR THE ROOKIE'S OVERWROUGHT MIND TO GRASP! HE WALKED THE STREETS FOR HOURS, WITHOUT DIRECTION OR PURPOSE--TRYING TO REASSURE HIMSELF OF HIS SANITY. THEN---
I--I'VE BEEN IN A DAZE! WITHOUT KNOWING IT, I--I HEADED BACK TO THE BALLPARK! ALL THE LIGHTS ARE OUT! THAT'S RIGHT--NO GAME SCHEDULED FOR TONIGHT!
UHH! A BALL! AS THOUGH SOMEONE LOPPED IT OVER THE RIGHT FIELD BLEACHERS!
STADIU
HIS FIRST IMPULSE WAS TO TURN TAIL AND RUN! BUT THEN--THE YOUNG SOUTHPAW FORCED HIMSELF TO REMAIN CALM! HE TRIED TO THINK RATIONALLY.
THEY'RE NOT BAD MEN---! THEY'RE ALL BALLPLAYERS OF REPUTATION! NO-NO REASON WHY THEY SHOULD HURT ME! I'LL GO IN AND LOOK AGAIN! THEY'RE PROBABLY NOT EVEN THERE!
THERE--I KNEW IT! NOT A SOUL!

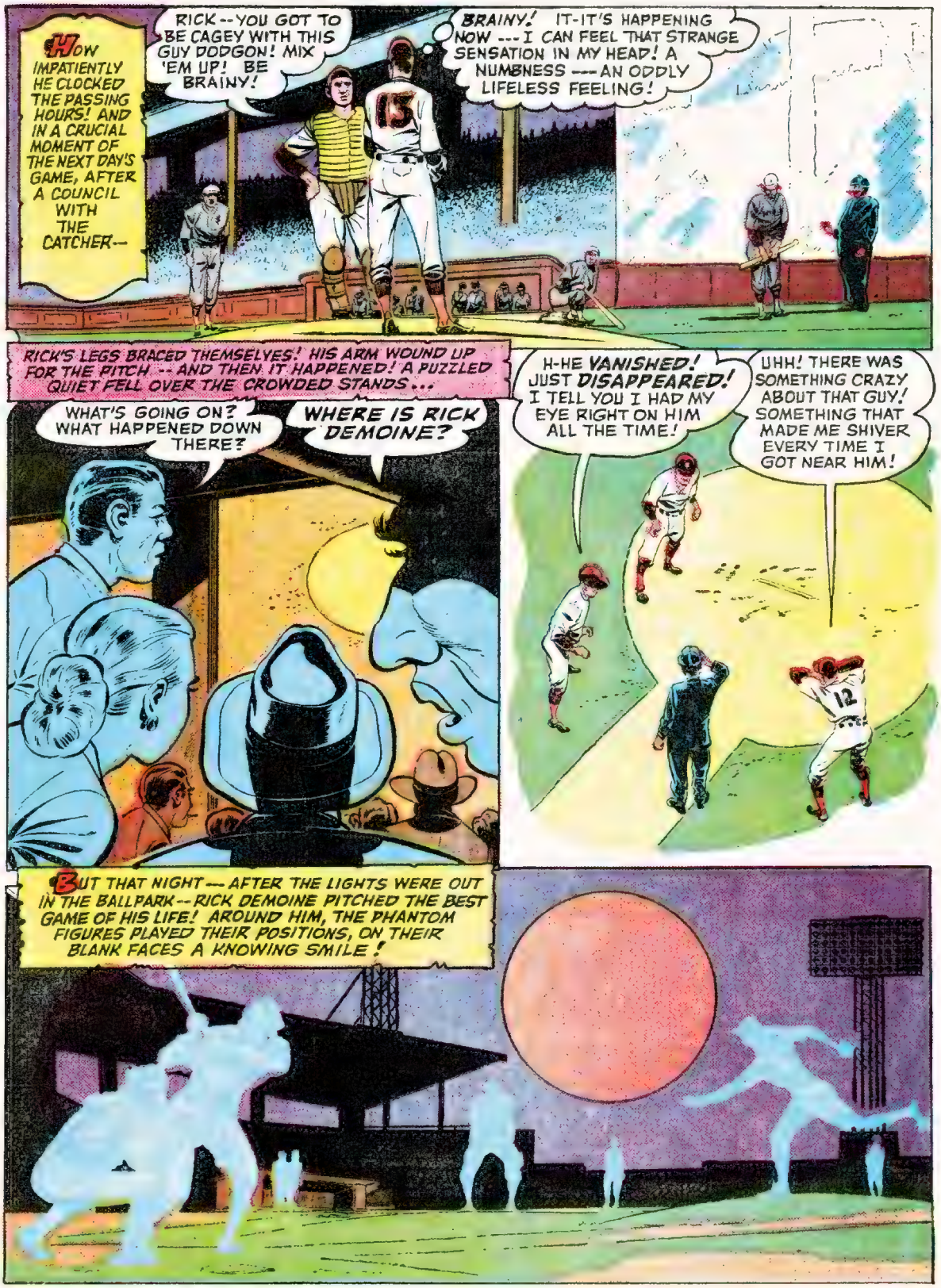

BUT THEN -- AS THOUGH OUT OF THE STILL NIGHT AIR, THE WEIRD APPARITIONS MATERIALIZED! DEMOINE STARED SPELLBOUND UPON THE SOUTHPAW IN THE PITCHER'S BOX!
T-THERE THEY ARE NOW! --OHH! THAT SOUTHPAW IN THE PITCHER'S BOX --- IT'S CY BALTON! THEY SAY HE WAS THE BEST--EVER! NO ONE EVER MATCHED HIS CONTROL!
I-IF I ONLY HAD HIS CONTROL -- I COULD TOSS MY FIREBALL FROM NOW TO KINGDOM COME! I'D PULVERIZE THEM!
IN TRANSFIXION, THE ROOKIE APPROACHED THE FAMED CY BALTON! INADVERTENTLY --HE'D CROSSED THE BASELINE AS A RUNNER HEADED HIS WAY! A COLD CHILL SEIZED HIM AS THE PHANTOM FIGURE RAN THROUGH HIM!
G-GET AWAY FROM ME! GET AWAY!
---OHHHHHH!
TERROR BLACKED-OUT HIS SHOCKED SENSES! AND WHEN HE REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS, HE STARED UP INTO THE CURIOUSLY IMPASSIVE FACES OF THE EERILY HUDDLED FORMS.
GO AWAY, RICK DEMOINE!
WE ARE NOT FOR YOUR EYES TO SEE!
WHAT AM I AFRAID OF? THERE'S NOTHING MENACING ABOUT THEM AT ALL! I'LL GET TO THE BOTTOM OF ALL THIS -- AND NOW!


GOSH, CY---WHAT I WOULDN'T DO FOR AN ARM LIKE THAT!
NO--DON'T TOUCH ME!
HEY---IT--IT--CAME OFF IN MY HAND!
RICK DEMOINE'S FIRST REACTION WAS ONE OF HORROR AND DISGUST! THEN HE REALIZED THAT THE OTHERS WERE THE MORE TERRIFIED--AS THOUGH THEY WERE AT HIS MERCY! HE CHUCKLED ARROGANTLY THEN, AND ---
WILL YOU LOOK AT THAT!--IT ALMOST MATCHES MY ARM! A PERFECT DOUBLE, I'D SAY! NOW, WHY CAN'T I ---?
WHAT ---THE! IT-IT'S DISSOLVING INTO MY OWN ARM!
HE SHUDDERED INVOLUNTARILY AT THE UNCANNY HAPPENING, AND WHIRLED TO FACE THE OTHERS FOR SOME POSSIBLE EXPLANATION! BUT ---
TH-THEY'RE GONE---VANISHED!
IT--IT'S ALL CRAZY! WHAT COULD IT MEAN?
THE INCREDIBLE ANSWER WAS FORTHCOMING THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON, IN A WAY THAT RICK DEMOINE, OR NO OTHER HUMAN BEING IN EXISTENCE COULD HAVE FORETOLD! THE INCIDENT HAD A PERFECTLY INNOCENT PRELUDE, WHEN ---
YOU WANT ME IN THERE?
IT'S YOUR BALL GAME, KID---! IT MIGHT BE YOUR LAST CHANCE TO MAKE A GO OF IT IN THE MAJORS!
B
BROOKS


OUT ON THE MOUND, AGAIN AND AGAIN, RICK FIRED HIS SPEEDBALL FOR THE PLATE! IT WENT WIDE OF ITS MARK! THEN--IN AN INSTANT--WITHOUT ANY WARNING--HE FELT A STRANGE, HEADY EXHILARATION, AND---
M-MY ARM! SOMETHING'S HAPPENED TO IT! SOMETHING INSIDE--! A KIND OF NUMBNESS, AS THOUGH IT WERE PITCHING WITHOUT MY WILL!
LOOK AT THE WAY HE'S PITCHING NOW! WOW! WHAT CONTROL! AND YOU CAN HARDLY SEE IT!
IT--IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! IT'S A COMPLETE SWITCH OF STYLE! H-HE'S PITCHING SIDEARM--LIKE--LIKE OLD CY BALTON! I CAN'T BELIEVE MY EYES!
PIX
IT'S TRUE--I'VE GOT CY BALTON'S ARM! IT TOOK SEVERAL HOURS BEFORE THE TRANSFORMATION! BUT WHY STOP THERE? WHY NOT GET ME THE FASTEST LEGS AND HARDIEST BODY IN BASE-BALL---IRON-MAN KLEES!
IN A KIND OF MANIACAL INTOXICATION, RICK LAY IN WAIT AT THE LIGHT-DARKENED BALLPARK. THE PHANTOM FIGURES CAVORTED UPON THE FIELD, UNWARY OF THE FEVERISHLY OBSERVING EYES. THEN--SEEKING HIS PREY, DEMOINE, STRUCK!
NO! NO--- DON'T DESTROY ME!
IT'LL BE IRON-MAN DEMOINE FROM NOW ON! THERE---!
NOW---TO MAKE IT A PART OF ME!
I--I DON'T FEEL ANY DIFFERENT! MAYBE IT'S LIKE THE ARM--NEEDS A LITTLE TIME TO WORK IN!
IT WAS THE FOURTH INNING OF THE NEXT AFTERNOON'S GAME. RICK WAS PUT IN AS A RELIEF HURLER. HE GOT TO FIRST ON A WALK AND WAS SACRIFICED TO THIRD. THEN--THE FEELING STRUCK HIM--AND HIS LEGS STARTED CHURNING THE EARTH LIKE A LOCOMOTIVE!
SAFE--AT HOME!
HE STOLE HOME! WHAT SPEED! I NEVER SAW A MAN MOVE THAT FAST SINCE IRON-MAN KLEES!


THE SPORT SCRIBES HAD A LOT TO SAY ABOUT THE SENSATIONAL ROOKIE--AND ALL WAS RIGHT IN RICK DEMOINE'S WORLD! THAT IS, UNTIL THE FOLLOWING MONDAY, HE WENT IN TO PITCH THE NIGHT GAME! THEN-- HIS BLOOD RAN COLD!
M-MY BODY! I CAN SEE RIGHT THROUGH IT! IT'S THE NIGHT!
THEY MUSTN'T SEE ME LIKE THIS! I CAN'T EVER PITCH NIGHT GAMES!
HEY--DEMOINE! GET BACK ON THAT MOUND! HEY-- COME BACK!
HIS ACTION ALMOST HAD HIM SUSPENDED, BUT HE WAS FAR TOO VALUABLE FOR THAT! MANAGER EDDIE LYKES WAS READY TO ACCEPT HIM, EVEN WITH HIS STRANGE IDIOSYNCRACIES. BUT ONE NIGHT ---
ALL SET, RICK! LIGHTS OUT!
NO! DON'T PUT THAT LIGHT OUT YET!
OH, NO! I'M-I'M GETTING OUT OF HERE!
AND SO, RICK BECAME A QUEER, SOLITARY FIGURE NOW-- WITHDRAWN FROM HIS TEAMMATES AND ALL THOSE WHO KNEW HIM FORMERLY. HIS PERCENTAGES WERE HIS LIFE!
THAT DEMOINE KID IS A POSSIBLE ALL-TIME GREAT! MAYBE THE GREATEST ALL AROUND PLAYER EVER KNOWN IN BASEBALL!
NO--HE'S LACKING THE BASE-BALL KNOW-HOW! REMEMBER OLD CHARLEY SIMMONS! WHAT A BRAIN! WHAT A QUICK THINKER!
THE BRAIN, EH? I CAN HAVE THAT, TOO! YES--I'LL BE THE GREATEST OF THEM ALL!

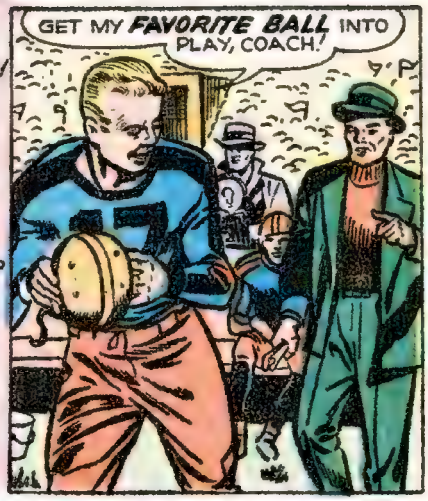
AGAIN THE HUNTER SOUGHT HIS PREY! THIS TIME, RICK KEPT HIS STEALTHY VIGIL FOR A WEEK. HE WAS GROWING WORRIED, IMPATIENT!
SUPPOSING THEY DON'T COME BACK AGAIN—EVER! NO! THAT MUSTN'T BE! I ALMOST HAVE EVERYTHING NOW! I NEED THEM ONLY THIS ONCE MORE!
THERE THEY ARE! HAH!
CHARLEY SIMMONS— I WANT YOU!
ALL I WANT—IS THIS! UUH!
NO! LET ME ALONE!
AT LAST— THE TRANSFORMATION IS COMPLETE!
YES, IN TWELVE HOURS, THE NECESSARY TIME LAPSE BEFORE THE BODY UNIT TRULY BECAME HIS OWN — RICK DEMOINE WAS MADE INTO A COMPLETE COMPOSITE — FROM HEAD TO TOE!
—SOON, SOON, MY NAME WILL GO DOWN IN HISTORY AS BASEBALL'S GREATEST IMMORTAL!


How impatiently he clocked the passing hours! And in a crucial moment of the next day's game, after a council with the catcher--
RICK--YOU GOT TO BE CAGEY WITH THIS GUY DODGON! MIX 'EM UP! BE BRAINY!
BRAINY! IT-IT'S HAPPENING NOW --- I CAN FEEL THAT STRANGE SENSATION IN MY HEAD! A NUMBNESS --- AN ODDLY LIFELESS FEELING!
RICK'S LEGS BRACED THEMSELVES! HIS ARM WOUND UP FOR THE PITCH -- AND THEN IT HAPPENED! A PUZZLED QUIET FELL OVER THE CROWDED STANDS...
WHAT'S GOING ON? WHAT HAPPENED DOWN THERE?
WHERE IS RICK DEMOINE?
H-HE VANISHED! JUST DISAPPEARED! I TELL YOU I HAD MY EYE RIGHT ON HIM ALL THE TIME!
UHH! THERE WAS SOMETHING CRAZY ABOUT THAT GUY! SOMETHING THAT MADE ME SHIVER EVERY TIME I GOT NEAR HIM!
But that night --- after the lights were out in the ballpark -- Rick Demoine pitched the best game of his life! Around him, the phantom figures played their positions, on their blank faces a knowing smile!

HEH...HEH...HEH... GREETINGS, FIENDS! THIS IS YOUR FRIEND THE COFFIN-KEEPER, ALL READY TO CHILL YOUR BLOOD WITH ANOTHER LOATHSOME TALE OF HORROR! GRAB YOUR PUTRID DROOL BIBS AND PREPARE TO ENJOY YOURSELVES AS YOU READ...
SKIN 'EM ALIVE!
NAUSEATING NOVELS
IT IS A TENSE MOMENT AT BUSCH STADIUM! THE SCORE IN THIS, THE CHAMPIONSHIP GAME, BETWEEN THE CHICAGO BLUE DEVILS AND THE ST. LOUIS TIGERS IS TIED AT 20-20! CHICAGO HAS JUST SCORED AND NOW, WHILE THOUSANDS WAIT BREATHLESSLY, THE BLUE DEVILS WILL TRY FOR THE EXTRA POINT...
GET IN THERE, TAD BOY! IT'S NOW OR NEVER!
BLUE DEVILS
50
THE CHICAGO FANS SCREAM THEIR DELIGHT AS TAD REYNOLDS EX-ALL AMERICAN FROM CALIFORNIA PREPARES TO ENTER THE GAME! REYNOLDS HASN'T MISSED AN EXTRA POINT IN THREE YEARS OF PRO BALL...
IT'S IN THE BAG, FRED! THERE GOES REYNOLDS!

Mysterious Adventures #18, February 1954. Artist unknown.

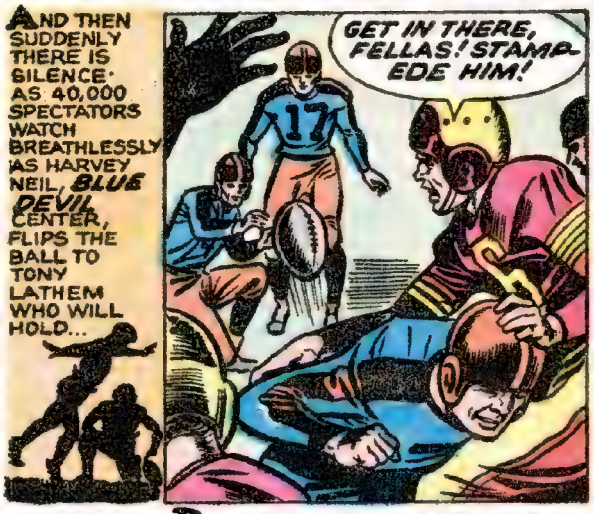
REYNOLDS MOVES SLOWLY, DELIBERATELY! THE TENSION AND EXCITEMENT DOESN'T BOTHER HIM! HE'S BEEN IN CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFFS BEFORE... AND NEVER MISSED!



THE KICKER'S "GOOD LUCK" BALL IS TOSSED TO THE UMPIRES WHO NOD AND TOSS IT TO CHICAGO'S CENTER / BERNIE YOUNG, COACH FOR FOR ST. LOUIS, MOANS AND HOLDS HIS HEAD IN ANGUISH...

THE DRUMS FROM THE CHICAGO BAND ROLL AS THE TWO TEAMS LINE UP FOR THE KICK...AND FROM THE ST. LOUIS SIDE OF THE STADIUM ONE MIGHTY YELL SWELLS OVER THE FIELD...

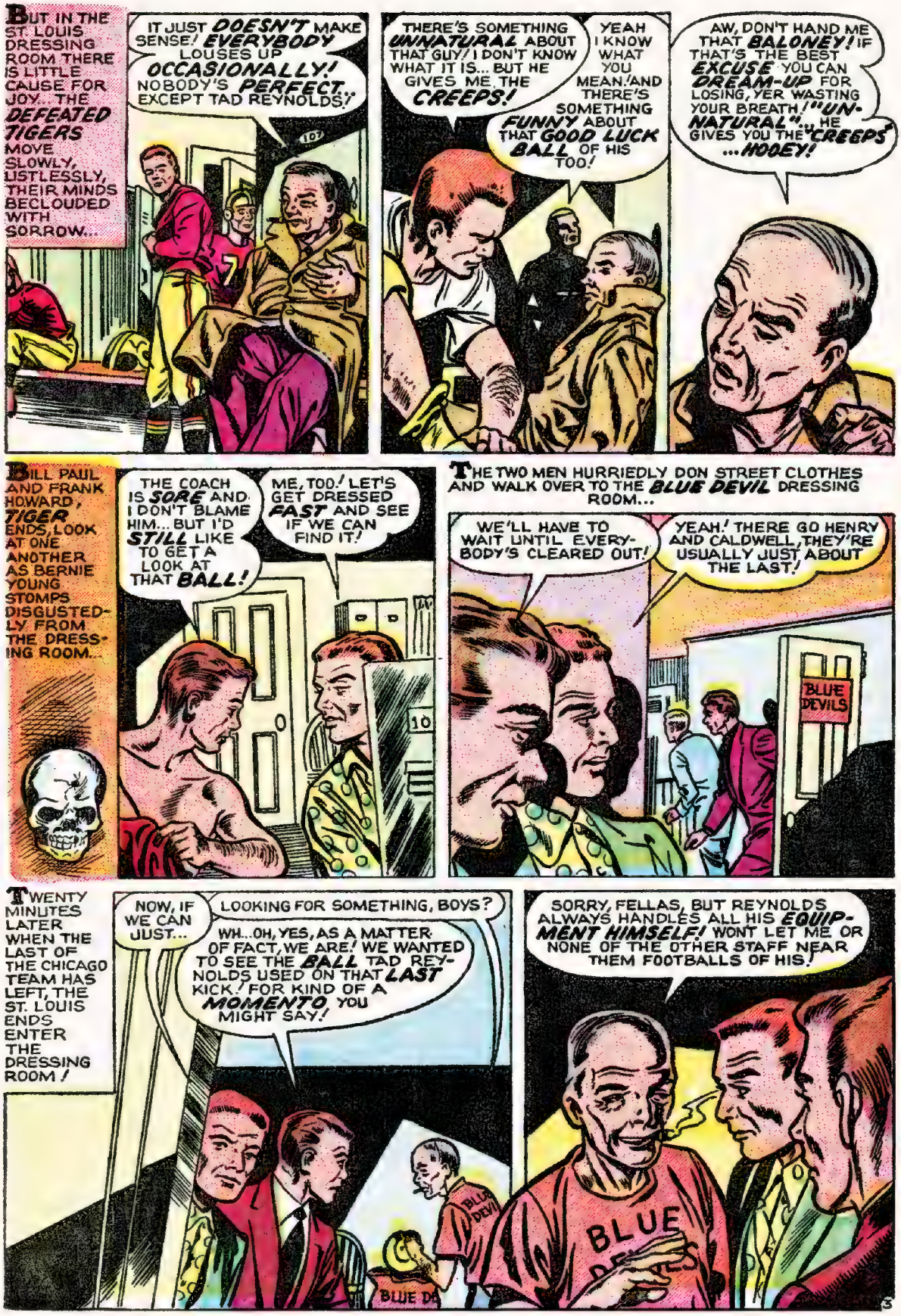
AND THEN SUDDENLY THERE IS SILENCE AS 40,000 SPECTATORS WATCH BREATHLESSLY AS HARVEY NEIL, BLUE DEVIL CENTER, FLIPS THE BALL TO TONY LATHEM WHO WILL HOLD...



LATHEM HOLDS AND THE FAMOUS REYNOLDS TOE CONNECTS SOLIDLY WITH THE OVAL BALL...

DESPITE A STRONG WIND, THE BALL SAILS END-OVER-END BETWEEN THE ST. LOUIS GOAL POSTS! IT'S A PERFECT KICK AND AS THE WHISTLE SOUNDS ENDING THE GAME, THE BLUE DEVILS WIN, 21-20!

DOWN ON THE PLAYING FIELD THE CHICAGO TEAM CONVERGES ON TAD REYNOLDS AND LIFTS THE MIGHTY HERO TO THEIR SHOULDERS! TO HIM THEY OWE THE CHAMPIONSHIP...


BUT IN THE ST. LOUIS DRESSING ROOM THERE IS LITTLE CAUSE FOR JOY... THE DEFEATED TIGERS MOVE SLOWLY, LISTLESSLY, THEIR MINDS BECLOUDED WITH SORROW...
IT JUST DOESN'T MAKE SENSE! EVERYBODY LOUSES UP OCCASIONALLY! NOBODY'S PERFECT... EXCEPT TAD REYNOLDS!
THERE'S SOMETHING UNNATURAL ABOUT THAT GUY! I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS... BUT HE GIVES ME THE CREEPS!
YEAH I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN! AND THERE'S SOMETHING FUNNY ABOUT THAT GOOD LUCK BALL OF HIS TOO!
AW, DON'T HAND ME THAT BALONEY! IF THAT'S THE BEST EXCUSE YOU CAN DREAM-UP FOR LOSING, YER WASTING YOUR BREATH! "UNNATURAL"... HE GIVES YOU THE "CREEPS" ...HOOEY!
BILL PAUL AND FRANK HOWARD, TIGER ENDS, LOOK AT ONE ANOTHER AS BERNIE YOUNG STOMPS DISGUSTEDLY FROM THE DRESSING ROOM...
THE COACH IS SORE AND I DON'T BLAME HIM... BUT I'D STILL LIKE TO GET A LOOK AT THAT BALL!
ME, TOO! LET'S GET DRESSED FAST AND SEE IF WE CAN FIND IT!
THE TWO MEN HURRIEDLY DON STREET CLOTHES AND WALK OVER TO THE BLUE DEVIL DRESSING ROOM...
WE'LL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL EVERYBODY'S CLEARED OUT!
YEAH! THERE GO HENRY AND CALDWELL, THEY'RE USUALLY JUST ABOUT THE LAST!
BLUE DEVILS
TWENTY MINUTES LATER WHEN THE LAST OF THE CHICAGO TEAM HAS LEFT, THE ST. LOUIS ENDS ENTER THE DRESSING ROOM!
NOW, IF WE CAN JUST...
LOOKING FOR SOMETHING, BOYS?
WH...OH, YES, AS A MATTER OF FACT, WE ARE! WE WANTED TO SEE THE BALL TAD REYNOLDS USED ON THAT LAST KICK! FOR KIND OF A MOMENTO, YOU MIGHT SAY!
SORRY, FELLAS, BUT REYNOLDS ALWAYS HANDLES ALL HIS EQUIPMENT HIMSELF! WONT LET ME OR NONE OF THE OTHER STAFF NEAR THEM FOOTBALLS OF HIS!
BLUE DEVILS

BUT INSTEAD OF GIVING UP, FRANK HOWARD AND BILL PAUL ARE MORE DETERMINED THAN EVER! AFTER A HASTY DINNER THEY DECIDE UPON A PLAN...

BOY, REYNOLDS SURE LIVES IN THE *MIDDLE OF NOWHERE*, DOESN'T HE?

YEAH, BUT AS FAR AS WE'RE CONCERNED, THAT'S *GOOD*! THERE'S JUST THAT ONE LIGHT ON IN THE BASEMENT... LET'S SNEAK OVER AND TAKE A LOOK!

THEY MAKE THEIR WAY STEALTHILY ACROSS THE DESERTED STREET AND PEER INTO THE BASEMENT ROOM...

FOR *CRIPES SAKE*!! LOOK AT THAT *STUFF*!

I DON'T *GET* IT! WHAT'S THAT *TABLE*... AND ALL THOSE *NEEDLES* AND *KNIVES*!?

ALMOST SIMULTANEOUSLY BOTH MEN FEEL A SLOW CHILL STEAL DOWN THEIR SPINES AND WITH A SINGLE INTENT, THEY TURN TO FLEE...

C'MON, FRANK LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

YEAH, I...

SORRY, BOYS BUT YOU'RE *NOT* GOING *ANYWHERE*! MAKE ONE *WRONG* MOVE AND I'LL PUT A *BULLET* THROUGH YOUR HEADS!

REYNOLDS LEADS THE TWO TERROR-STRICKEN MEN DOWN INTO THE BASEMENT ROOM AND THEN LAUGHS JEERINGLY AT THEM!

OLD HARRY CALLED AND TOLD ME TWO GUYS WERE INTERESTED IN MY FOOTBALL! I KIND OF THOUGHT YOU MIGHT DROP AROUND... SO I'VE BEEN *WAITING* FOR YOU! GO AHEAD, *HOT SHOTS*... *LOOK TO YOUR HEARTS CONTENT*!

W-WE DIDN'T MEAN ANYTHING, TAD! JUST... JUST THOUGHT MAYBE... MAYBE

YOU THOUGHT MAYBE SOMETHING WAS FUNNY ABOUT THE BALL! WELL, YOU WERE RIGHT, HOWARD... *VERY RIGHT*! FEEL IT... GO AHEAD! *SOFT*, ISN'T IT! *REAL SOFT*!

YEAH... I-IT ALMOST FEELS LIKE... LIKE...

LIKE HUMAN SKIN! GO *AHEAD*, SAY IT... *HUMAN SKIN*! NOTHING BETTER FOR KICKING!... *PIGSKIN* IS ALL RIGHT, BUT TAKE IT FROM ME, *HUMAN SKIN'S THE BEST*!

NO, NO...!

AND NOW FRANK AND BILL KNOW THE MEANING OF THE OPERATING TABLE AND THE LONG KNIVES AND NEEDLES... POOR LADS, TCH, TCH, TCH, YOU MIGHT SAY THE WERE ALL *WRAPPED UP* IN THEIR FAVORITE SPORT, *FOOTBALL*!

I'M GLAD THE BOYS STOPPED BY... MY OLD BALLS WERE GETTING A *LITTLE* WORN OUT!

AND WHEN THE BLUE DEVILS PLAYED THEIR FIRST GAME NEXT SEASON I DOUBT THAT ANYONE NOTICED THE SMALL TATTOO ON THE FOOTBALL... THE SMALL TATTOO WITH THE INITIALS F.H....

HURRAH FOR REYNOLDS!

LOOK AT THAT BALL GO!

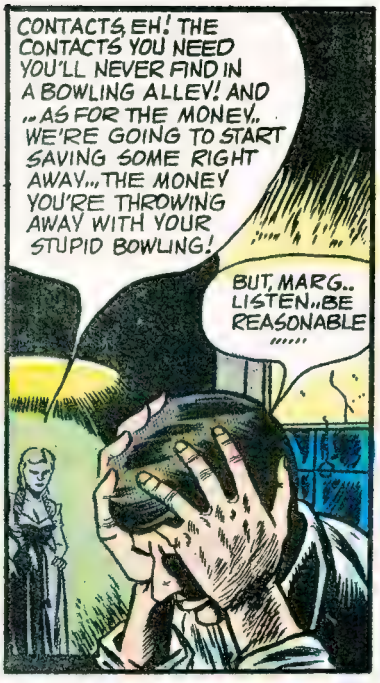
F.H.

THE END

IT'S A GREAT INDOOR SPORT. MILLIONS PARTICIPATE IN IT. THOUSANDS ARE FANATICS. LIKE MARJORIE MARTIN. SHE REALLY LOST HER HEAD OVER BOWLING... LITERALLY AND ACTUALLY.. SHE BECAME AN...
NIGHT OWL
IT WAS GETTING TO BE AN OLD ROUTINE. FRED MARTIN SLIPPED INTO THE HOUSE AT 2:00 A.M. ... BUT HIS WIFE MARJORIE WAS AWAKE... WAITING...
DO YOU KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS? FRED, THIS HAS GOT TO STOP! THIS IS THE FOURTH TIME THIS WEEK...
BUT, MARJ, YOU KNOW WHERE I WAS! I WAS ONLY BOWLING...
BOWLING! THAT'S ALL I EVER HEAR.. ALL YOU EVER TALK ABOUT NOW! BOWLING... BOWLING... FOUR TIMES THIS WEEK... THREE TIMES LAST...
BUT, MARJ, ... IT'S GOOD FOR ME! AFTER A HARD DAY AT THE OFFICE. .. RELAXATION!
MARTY ELKIN

Horrific #6, July 1953. Artist: Marty Elkin.

HARD DAY AT THE OFFICE? WHO DO YOU THINK YOU'RE KIDDING, FRED MARTIN! IF YOU WEREN'T OUT HALF THE NIGHT AND GOT SOME SLEEP INSTEAD,
STOP IT, MARJ! MY BOWLING LEAGUE IS IMPORTANT. I MEET PEOPLE,, MAKE CONTACTS,, IT MIGHT MEAN A BETTER JOB! WE CAN USE THE MONEY!


CONTACTS, EH! THE CONTACTS YOU NEED YOU'LL NEVER FIND IN A BOWLING ALLEY! AND ,, AS FOR THE MONEY,, WE'RE GOING TO START SAVING SOME RIGHT AWAY,,, THE MONEY YOU'RE THROWING AWAY WITH YOUR STUPID BOWLING!
BUT, MARG.. LISTEN,, BE REASONABLE ,,,,,,

YES,, I'LL BE REASONABLE! THE KIDS NEED NEW CLOTHES! THE FURNITURE NEEDS TO BE REUPHOLSTERED,, I HAVEN'T BOUGHT A NEW DRESS IN MONTHS! THAT'S REASONABLE ,,, AND THAT'S WHERE THE MONEY IS GOING FROM NOW ON!

FRED ARGUED AND CAJOLED AND BEGGED, BUT MARJORIE WAS FIRM. AS FOR FRED'S BOWLING ,,, WELL HIS FRIENDS GOT THE STORY THE FOLLOWING EVENING...

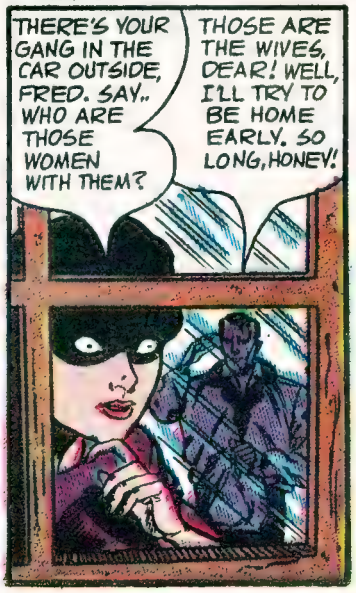
AND THAT WAS THAT! MARJORIE KEPT FRED AT HOME EVERY EVENING UNTIL THURSDAY. FRED COULD HARDLY WAIT UNTIL HE WAS BACK WITH THE BOYS...

GOSH, FRED, THE TEAM IS SUNK WITHOUT YOU. WE'LL NEVER WIN THE TROPHY NOW!
SORRY, FELLOWS,, THAT'S HOW IT IS. WHEN MY WIFE MAKES HER MIND UP,,,
LISTEN,, I'VE GOT AN IDEA! MAYBE IT WILL CHANGE MARJORIE'S ATTITUDE. LISTEN,,,

THAT NIGHT WHEN FRED GOT HOME HE INNOCENTLY SOUNDED OUT HIS WIFE...

SAY, MARJ,, HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO OUT MORE OFTEN,, MAYBE YOU'D LIKE TO GO BOWLING WITH ME?
ME GO BOWLING! OVER MY DEAD BODY! I'VE GOT BETTER THINGS TO DO!

FRED SAID NOTHING MORE ABOUT IT,, AT LEAST NOT TO MARJ. THE NEXT THURSDAY EVENING...


THERE'S YOUR GANG IN THE CAR OUTSIDE, FRED. SAY,, WHO ARE THOSE WOMEN WITH THEM?
THOSE ARE THE WIVES, DEAR! WELL, I'LL TRY TO BE HOME EARLY. SO LONG, HONEY!

MARJORIE QUICKLY BEGAN TO SPECULATE PERHAPS THERE WAS MORE BEHIND FRED'S BOWLING THAN MET THE EYE...

SO THEIR WIVES GO BOWLING TOO, EH? NOW WHAT WOULD HE BE DOING ALL ALONE?

NO, FRED NEVER HAD TOLD MARJORIE THAT THE WIFES WENT BOWLING... BUT ONLY BECAUSE THIS WAS THE VERY FIRST TIME THEY WENT. MARJORIE DIDN'T KNOW THIS AS SHE CALLED UP HER SISTER EVELYN...

HELLO... EVELYN? CAN YOU SIT WITH THE CHILDREN FOR ME NEXT THURSDAY EVENING... I'M GOING OUT WITH FRED. YOU WILL?.. OH, THANKS, HONEY!

WHEN MARJORIE TOLD FRED SHE WAS GOING BOWLING WITH HIM HE WAS DELIGHTED! AND MARJORIE TOOK TO THE GAME LIKE A NATURAL!

ANOTHER SPARE! THAT'S GREAT! YOUR SCORE IS 127... AND TWO FRAMES TO GO!

BLAM

MARJORIE DID VERY WELL! EVERYONE COMPLIMENTED HER ENTHUSIASTICALLY...

YOU HIT 153, MARJ! THAT'S TERRIFIC FOR A BEGINNER.. ESPECIALLY A WOMAN!

JUST LIKE YOU MEN! YOU'RE NEVER WILLING TO GIVE A WOMAN ANY CREDIT!

ON THE WAY HOME, MARJORIE TALKED OF NOTHING BUT BOWLING. FRED SMILED TO HIMSELF THE SCHEME HAD WORKED...

I'M COMING WITH YOU EVERY THURSDAY NIGHT, FRED. EVELYN WILL SIT WITH THE CHILDREN. I'LL BUY MY OWN BOWLING SHOES.. MY OWN BALL.. AND...

I KNEW YOU'D LIKE IT, DEAR...

BOWLING

PUSH

PUSH

THE BOYS CALLED FRED AT THE OFFICE THE NEXT MORNING...

JIM! SHE'S COMING WITH ME EVERY WEEK NOW. BUT I'VE GOT TO GET HER TO LET ME GO BOWLING MORE OFTEN AGAIN.

WE'LL GET THE GALS TO ORGANIZE THEIR OWN LEAGUE. THEN NOTHING'LL KEEP HER HOME!

MARJORIE WAS MORE IMPATIENT THAN FRED FOR EVELYN TO SHOW UP THE NEXT THURSDAY NIGHT...

EVELYN, HONEY! I COULDN'T WAIT 'TILL YOU'D COME. WE'RE FORMING A WOMAN'S BOWLING LEAGUE TONIGHT... SORRY TO DASH OUT LIKE THIS.

BUT MARJORIE.. I WAS HOPING WE COULD TALK FOR A WHILE...

S'LONG EVELYN, THANKS!

MARJORIE AND FRED DIDN'T GET HOME TILL ALMOST 1 AM

SORRY IT'S SO LATE, DEAR! WE HAD TO SET UP TEAMS AND SCHEDULES. EV, YOU'LL SIT FOR US AGAIN TOMORROW, AND TUESDAY, WON'T YOU?

BUT, MARJ..

BE A PAL EVELYN, SAY YES!

FOR ALMOST A MONTH EVELYN BABY SAT FOR MARJORIE THREE OR FOUR TIMES A WEEK. THEN ONE DAY...

CAN YOU ALSO MAKE IT NEXT MONDAY, EVELYN? WE'RE HAVING A BIG TOURNAMENT!

I'M SORRY! NO MORE.. I'M THROUGH! I'M NOT GOING TO GIVE UP MY OWN LIFE JUST SO YOU CAN ENJOY YOURSELF! GET ANOTHER SITTER!

SO MARJORIE HIRED A SITTER.. FRED WENT DIRECTLY FROM THE OFFICE TO THE BOWLING ALLEYS. HE DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE SITTER UNTIL THEY GOT HOME THAT NIGHT...

GOSH, I THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER GET HOME, MRS. MARTIN. IT'S SORT OF LATE FOR ME TO BE OUT!

I'M SORRY, AGNES! FRED, GIVE HER THREE DOLLARS.

WHAT?

WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME EVELYN COULDN'T COME? ... THREE BUCKS FOR A GREEN KID TO STAY WITH THE CHILDREN!

GET USED TO IT, FRED.. EVELYN CAN'T COME ANY MORE ... EVER!

WHY, IT'LL COST US NINE TO TWELVE BUCKS A WEEK ... BESIDES WHAT WE ALSO SPEND AT THE ALLEYS. WE CAN'T DO IT MARJ.. WE HAVEN'T GOT THAT KIND OF DOUGH!

WHY NOT? WE CAN WIN THE MONEY BACK BY BETTING ON OURSELVES, CAN'T WE? DO YOU WANT TO GIVE UP BOWLING? GIVE UP THE LEAGUE?

THE LEAGUE.. THAT'S ALL I EVER HEAR NOW. SURE I LOVE BOWLING ... BUT WE CAN'T AFFORD BABY-SITTERS FEES ON TOP OF EVERYTHING!

OH YES WE CAN! I'VE BEEN A HOUSEWIFE LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW HOW TO SAVE MONEY! I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO DO IT. DON'T TELL ME WE CAN'T AFFORD IT!

FRED LET THE MATTER DROP RIGHT THERE. HE'D GIVE HIS WIFE A CHANCE. BUT SHE'D BETTER SHOW HIM SHE COULD MANAGE... OR ELSE! THINGS STARTED CHANGING THE VERY NEXT DAY...

MARJ.. WHAT IS THIS? THIS MEAT IS LOUSY.. WE NEVER HAD ANYTHING LIKE THIS BEFORE!

IT'S NOT CHOICE CUT, DEAR! I'M TRYING TO SAVE MONEY ON FOOD FIRST OF ALL!

YES, MARJORIE BEGAN TO CUT EXPENSES RUTHLESSLY. AND FRED SOON BECAME AWARE OF IT...

MARJ,, WHAT IS THIS? I DON'T HAVE A CLEAN SHIRT TO WEAR TO THE OFFICE. WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH THE LAUNDRY?

I'M SORRY, FRED,,, YOU'LL HAVE TO WEAR THE SAME SHIRT YOU WORE YESTERDAY. I'M DOING THE LAUNDRY MYSELF NOW. I JUST HAVEN'T HAD TIME TO GET TO YOUR SHIRTS.

WHEN HE GOT HOME IN THE EVENING, FRED NOTICED SOMETHING ELSE, TOO...

MARJ,, THIS HOUSE LOOKS LIKE A PIGSTY! WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE MAID?

OH,, I FORGOT TO TELL YOU, DEAR. I'M DOING THE HOUSE MYSELF NOW. I'VE JUST BEEN TOO BUSY LATELY IT SEEMS.

AND ONE EVENING WHEN HE CAME HOME EARLY, FRED FOUND HIS TWO CHILDREN SITTING ON THE FRONT STEPS, CRYING...

DORA,, BOBBIE?,, WHAT'S THE MATTER? LOOK HOW DIRTY YOU ARE,,, WHY ARE YOU CRYING,, WHERE'S YOUR MOTHER?

OH, DADDY,, +-SOB+- +-SOB+- WE'RE SO GLAD YOU CAME HOME,, +-SOB+-, WE DON'T KNOW WHERE MOMMY IS,, +-SOB+- WE'RE ALL ALONE, +-SOB+-

FRED TOOK THE KIDS INSIDE... WASHED THEM... THERE WAS NO FOOD IN THE HOUSE. FRED DASHED DOWN TO THE SUPER MARKET...

I TELL YOU, PAULA. THAT MARTIN WOMAN IS AN ABSOLUTE DISGRACE. I SAW HER ENTER THAT BOWLING ALLEY AGAIN... SHE'S THERE PRACTICALLY EVERY AFTERNOON.

IT'S DISGUSTING,, BUT HER HUSBAND IS EQUALLY TO BLAME... I PITY THOSE TWO SWEET LITTLE CHILDREN OF THEIRS.

FRED HEARD ENOUGH. HE RAN HOME... SAT AND WAITED FOR MARJORIE. PRESENTLY SHE RETURNED,, BREATHLESSLY,,

FRED! I HAD NO IDEA...

„THAT I'D BE HOME EARLY? THAT I'D FIND OUT WHERE YOU'VE BEEN KEEPING YOURSELF? THAT I'D LEARN WHY THE HOUSE IS A SHAMBLE. WHY THE KIDS ARE DIRTY... HUNGRY,, LEFT OUT ALL ALONE...

SAVING MONEY ARE YOU? FOR WHAT?,, FOR YOUR BOWLING,, WHILE WE GO WITHOUT DECENT MEALS,, WITHOUT A CLEAN HOME,, WITHOUT PROPER CARE FOR DORA AND BOBBIE..!!

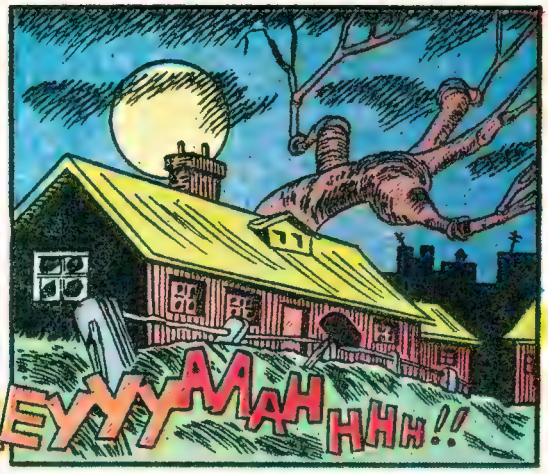
WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME? I'M TIRED OF COOKING AND CLEANING. WHY CAN'T YOU MAKE ENOUGH MONEY SO WE CAN HAVE THE THINGS I WANT...

THE ARGUMENT MOUNTED IN INTENSITY! NERVES BECAME RAW... MARJORIE'S TEMPER CRACKED FIRST. FRED DUCKED AS SHE HEAVED HER BOWLING BALL AT HIM. ENRAGED HE PICKED UP A LONG CARVING KNIFE...

ALL RIGHT, MARJ... THAT DOES IT! THAT'S THE LAST TIME YOU'LL EVER THROW A BOWLING BALL...

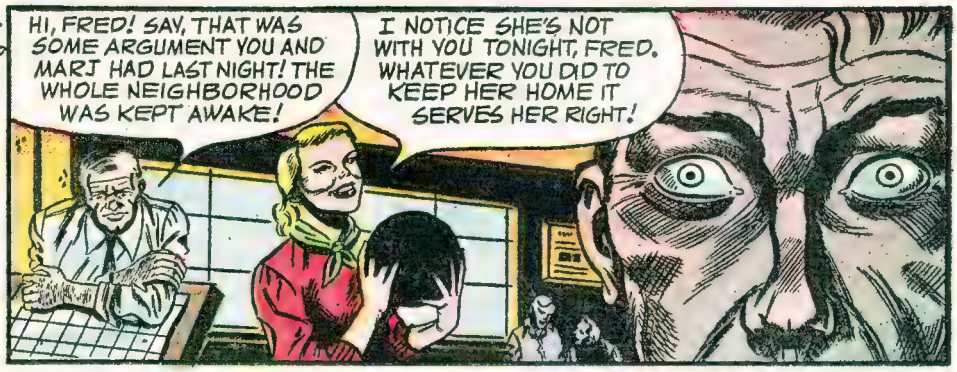
NO, FRED,, I DIDN'T MEAN IT,, PLEASE, FRED,, NO,,!!

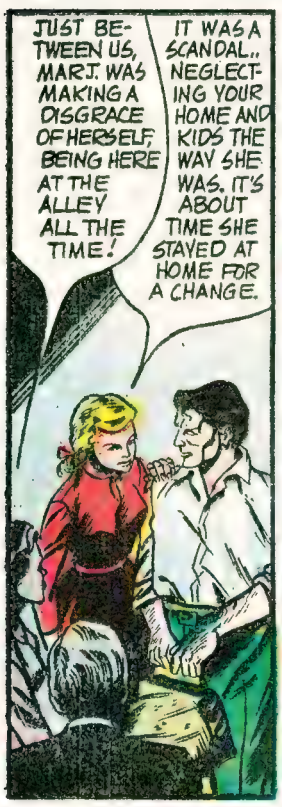
OUTSIDE THE MARTIN HOME ALL WAS DARK AND QUIET. SUDDENLY A SHATTERING, TERRIFYING SCREAM PIERCED THE STILL NIGHT AIR...



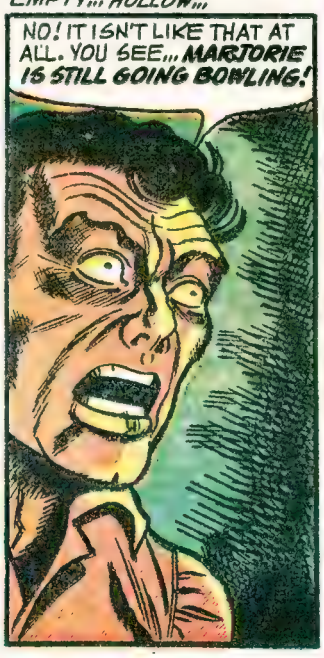
THE NEIGHBORING CITIZENS, AROUSED FROM PEACEFUL SLUMBER, RAN TO THEIR WINDOWS. THERE WAS NOTHING TO BE SEEN EXCEPT A LONE LIGHT IN THE BATHROOM OF THE MARTIN HOME...

THE NEXT NIGHT FRED SHOWED UP AS USUAL AT THE BOWLING ALLEYS. HIS FRIENDS CROWDED AROUND. THEY DID NOT NOTICE THE GLAZED LOOK IN FRED'S EYES... THE WAY HE MOVED AS IF IN A TRANCE...


HI, FRED! SAY, THAT WAS SOME ARGUMENT YOU AND MARJ HAD LAST NIGHT! THE WHOLE NEIGHBORHOOD WAS KEPT AWAKE!
I NOTICE SHE'S NOT WITH YOU TONIGHT, FRED. WHATEVER YOU DID TO KEEP HER HOME IT SERVES HER RIGHT!

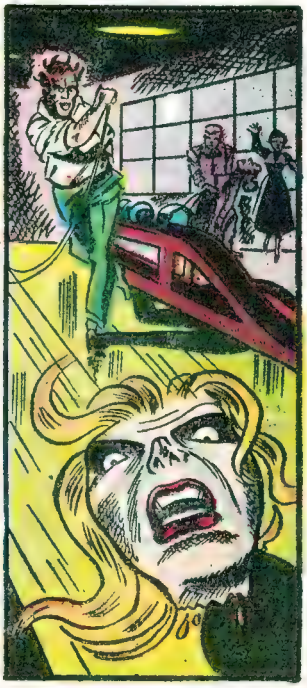

JUST BETWEEN US, MARJ. WAS MAKING A DISGRACE OF HERSELF, BEING HERE AT THE ALLEY ALL THE TIME!
IT WAS A SCANDAL.. NEGLECTING YOUR HOME AND KIDS THE WAY SHE WAS. IT'S ABOUT TIME SHE STAYED AT HOME FOR A CHANGE.

FRED'S EYES STARED STRAIGHT AHEAD... HIS HANDS FUMBLED WITH THE ZIPPER OF HIS BOWLING BAG. WHEN HE FINALLY SPOKE, HIS VOICE SOUNDED EMPTY... HOLLOW...



HIS FACE TAUT... HIS COLORING NOW SHELL WHITE.. EACH MUSCLE IN HIS BODY STRAINED AND STIFF. FRED TOOK THE OBJECT FROM HIS BOWLING BAG... HIS FRIENDS SCREAMED IN HORROR AS FRED STEPPED UP.. TOOK HIS STANCE.. MADE HIS APPROACH.. SWINGING HIS ARM..

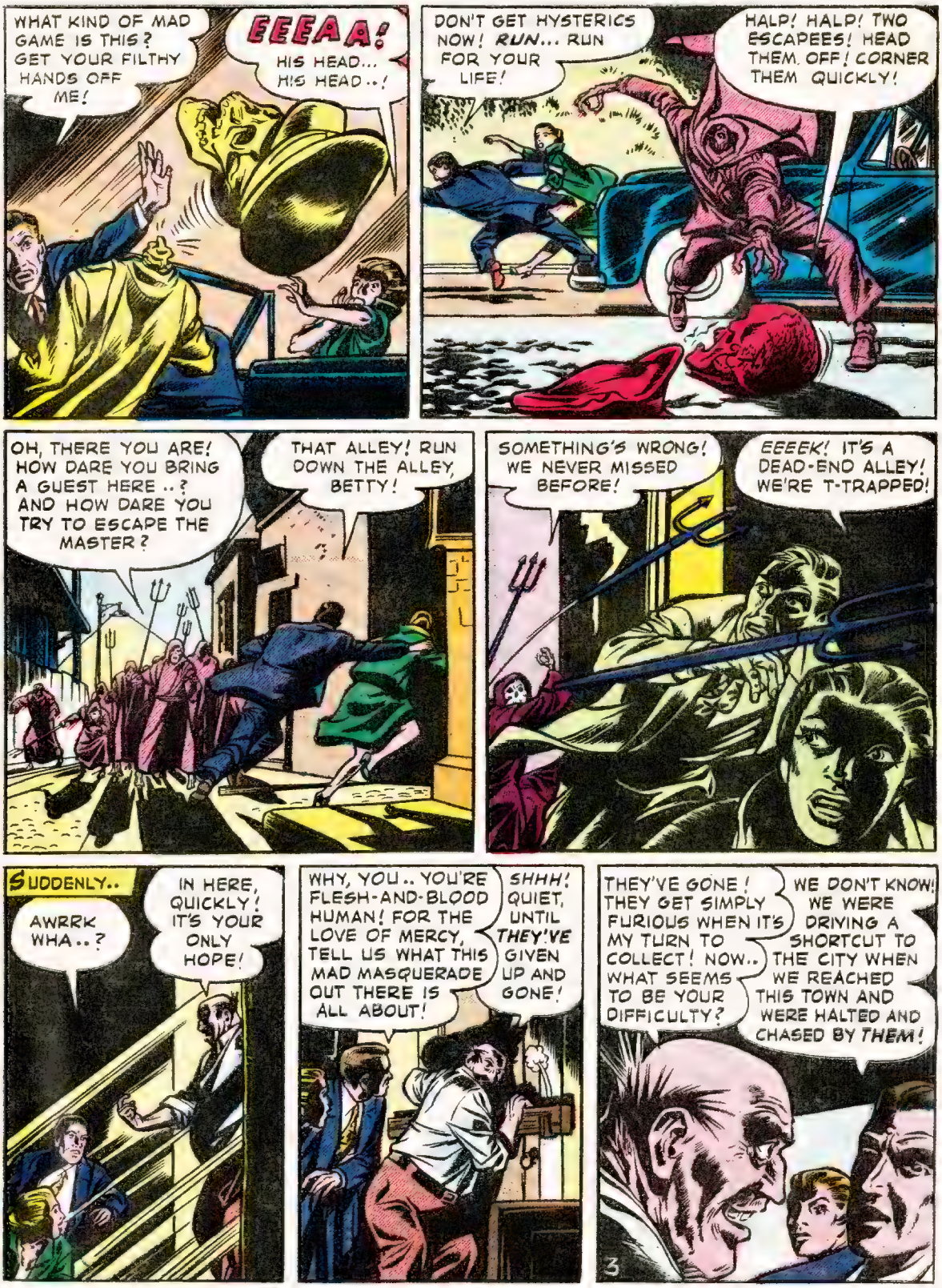
FRED RELEASED THE OBJECT IN HIS HAND! MARJORIE'S HEAD WENT CLUMPING DOWN THE ALLEY....



Valley of Horror
IF YOU'RE PLANNING A MOTOR TRIP SOON... BE CAREFUL WHAT ROAD MAP YOU USE! KEEP TO THE MAIN HIGHWAYS AND LISTEN TO THE GRIM WARNING OF NATIVES BEFORE YOU TRY A SHORTCUT! SOMEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY THERE MAY BE OTHER ROADMAPS, PLANNED BY SATAN HIMSELF, TO LEAD THE UNWARY INTO THAT DARK CITY OF HORROR THAT CAN ONLY BE ... A SUBURB OF HELL!
JIM AND BETTY DRAKE HAD CHOSEN A MOTOR TRIP WEST FOR THEIR HONEYMOON ..
DON'T YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT ROAD WE TAKE NEXT, DARLING?
NOT THE FAINTEST! OUR ROADMAP ENDS AT THE BORDER! YOU'VE GOT TO PICK UP A NEW MAP AT THE NEXT FILLING STATION!
EEK! THAT CAR AHEAD, JIM ... IT MISSED THE SHARP TURN!
WHAT A TERRIBLE SMASHUP! I'VE GOT TO SEE WHAT WE CAN DO TO HELP!
LUCKILY A STATE POLICE CAR, COMING FROM THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION WAS AVAILABLE TO MEET THE EMERGENCY!
YOU RUN ALONG AND ENJOY YOUR HONEYMOON, MISTER! I'VE RADIOED FOR AN AMBULANCE! HE'S STILL ALIVE IN THERE!
THANKS, OFFICER! WE'RE ANXIOUS TO REACH THE CITY BEFORE TOO LATE..
HEY!. THERE'S THE ROADMAP WE NEED!

Web of Evil #8, November 1953. Artist: Jack Cole.

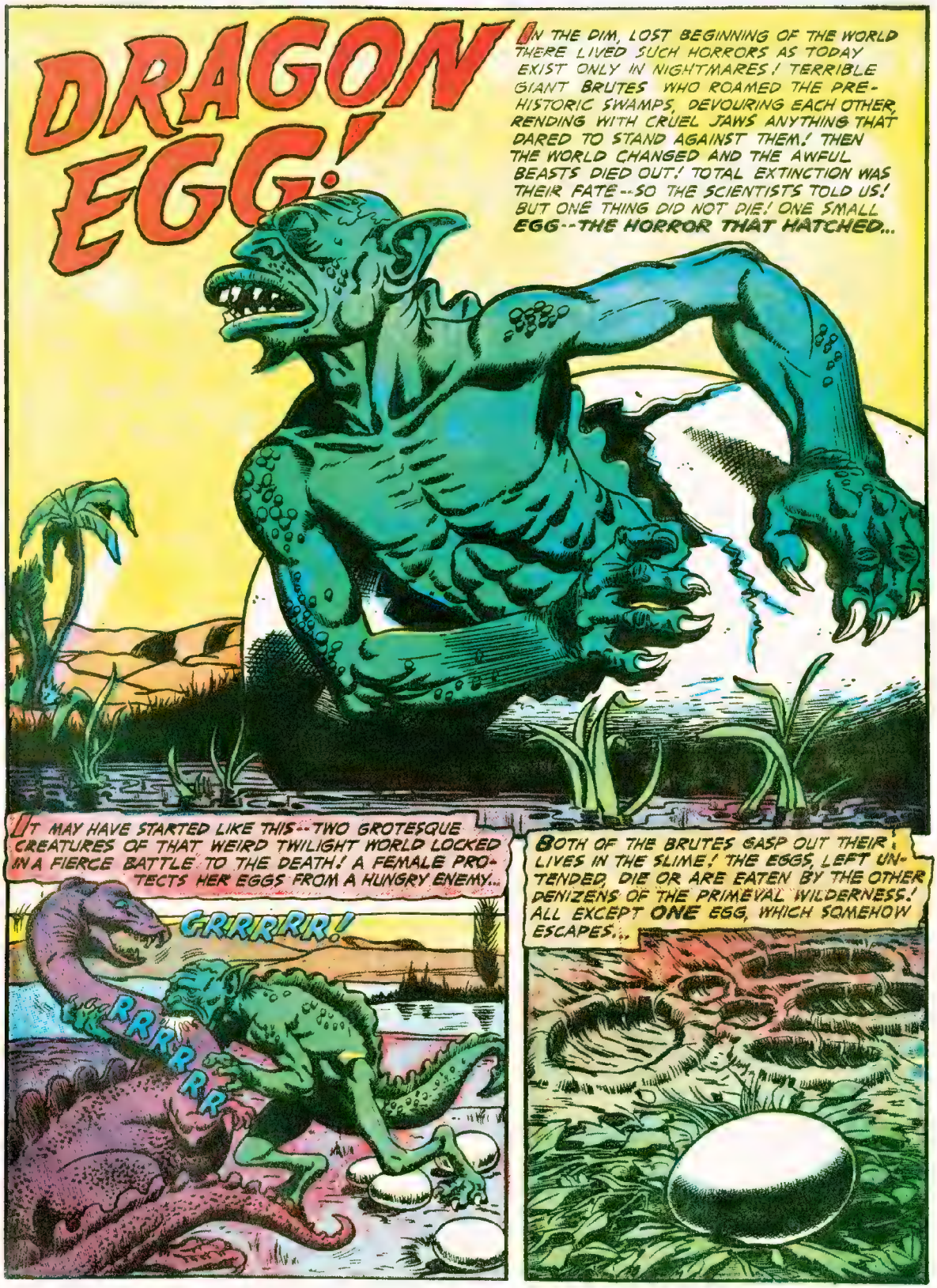
.. AND THE TROOPER SAID TO TAKE HIS ROADMAP! THAT MAN WON'T BE GOING ANYWHERE BUT TO THE HOSPITAL FOR A LONG TIME!
OKAY, BUT I F-FEEL SO QUEER! THAT POOR MAN, ALL SMASHED UP!
MELVILLE
PERDITION VALLEY RD
GOOD SHORT CUT
WAIT! THE MAP SHOWS A SHORT CUT THROUGH PERDITION VALLEY, JIM! WE CAN CUT OFF ELEVEN MILES THIS WAY!
OKAY! THE GUY MUST HAVE KNOWN THE ROAD WAS GOOD OR HE WOULDN'T HAVE MARKED THIS SHORTCUT! I'LL TURN OFF HERE!
PERDITION VALLEY
SUDDENLY, OUT OF THE SHADOWS..
HOLD IT, FOLKS! YOU DON'T WANT TO DRIVE THROUGH PERDITION VALLEY AT NIGHT! THERE'S DARK THINGS, EVIL THINGS, LURKING THERE!
WHAT TH ..? ER.. THANKS A LOT, FRIEND, BUT WE AREN'T AFRAID OF SPOOKS AND GOBLINS! WE WANT TO REACH THE CITY! SORRY.. !
PERDITION VALLEY
J-JIM, I'M SCARED! MAYBE WE SHOULD TURN BACK AND TAKE THE LONG WAY!
DON'T BE SILLY, SWEET! WE'RE NOT LETTING ANY HE-WITCH SCARE US INTO EXTRA MILES OF DRIVING! RELAX AND WATCH FOR SIGNS!
JIM, I DON'T LIKE IT! TH-THERE'S NO MIDWAY CITY ON THE MAP!
RELAX, DEAR! THE WEST IS FULL OF NEW TOWNS THAT HAVE SPRUNG UP AROUND DAMS OR DEVELOPMENTS OR ATOMIC PROJECTS! DON'T BE SO JITTERY!
MIDWAY CITY
POINT OF NO RETURN!
A FEW BLOCKS INTO THE STRANGELY SILENT CITY ...
HOLD IT! YOU'RE JOHN DRAKE, AREN'T YOU?
WHY .. NO, I'M NOT! I'M JIM DRAKE, OFFICER ... AND THIS IS MY WIFE, BETTY!
2
DON'T LIE TO ME, DOOMED ONE! YOU'RE JOHN DRAKE AND YOU WERE DUE HERE HALF AN HOUR AGO! WHAT DELAYED YOU?
EEAHH!
EEEK!


WHAT KIND OF MAD GAME IS THIS? GET YOUR FILTHY HANDS OFF ME!
EEEAA!
HIS HEAD... HIS HEAD..!
DON'T GET HYSTERICS NOW! RUN... RUN FOR YOUR LIFE!
HALP! HALP! TWO ESCAPEES! HEAD THEM OFF! CORNER THEM QUICKLY!
OH, THERE YOU ARE! HOW DARE YOU BRING A GUEST HERE..? AND HOW DARE YOU TRY TO ESCAPE THE MASTER?
THAT ALLEY! RUN DOWN THE ALLEY, BETTY!
SOMETHING'S WRONG! WE NEVER MISSED BEFORE!
EEEEK! IT'S A DEAD-END ALLEY! WE'RE T-TRAPPED!
SUDDENLY..
AWRRK WHA..?
IN HERE, QUICKLY! IT'S YOUR ONLY HOPE!
WHY, YOU.. YOU'RE FLESH-AND-BLOOD HUMAN! FOR THE LOVE OF MERCY, TELL US WHAT THIS MAD MASQUERADE OUT THERE IS ALL ABOUT!
SHHH! QUIET, UNTIL THEY'VE GIVEN UP AND GONE!
THEY'VE GONE! THEY GET SIMPLY FURIOUS WHEN IT'S MY TURN TO COLLECT! NOW.. WHAT SEEMS TO BE YOUR DIFFICULTY?
WE DON'T KNOW! WE WERE DRIVING A SHORTCUT TO THE CITY WHEN WE REACHED THIS TOWN AND WERE HALTED AND CHASED BY THEM!
3

HMM! YOU'RE JOHN DRAKE, DUE 11:27 P.M, UNDERWORLD CONNECTIONS, GRAFT, HIT-AND-RUN MANSLAUGHTER .. BUT NOT A WORD ABOUT THE GIRL!
BUT I'M NOT AND I CAN PROVE IT! I'M JIM DRAKE AND THIS IS MY BRIDE, BETTY! HERE, LOOK AT MY DRIVER'S LICENSE..
OH, MY MASTER'S HORNS AND HOOFS.. WHAT A MESS! YOU ARE JIM DRAKE!. .. AND JOHN DRAKE HAS GIVEN US THE SLIP, SOMEHOW!
THEN LET US GO! ALL WE WANT TO DO IS GET IN OUR CAR AND GET OUT OF THIS TERRIBLE SPOT!
THIS IS CURSED AWKWARD! YOU'RE ALIVE, YOU SEE... AND THAT DOES COMPLICATE MATTERS! THIS IS THE BASIC TRAINING SPOT FOR THE DARK REALM BELOW! BUT YOU HAVEN'T EVEN BEEN DRAFTED..!
OH, PLEASE, PLEASE..! JUST LET US GO! OPEN THE DOOR..!
VERY WELL ..IF YOU INSIST!
THERE THEY ARE! THE MASTER'S EMISSARY HAS GIVEN THEM BACK TO US!
YOU DIRTY RAT..!
TAKE THAT, YOU FILTHY DOUBLE-CROSSER!
EEEAAGHH!
GRAB THEM! DON'T LET THEM ESCAPE AGAIN!
THEY DARED TO COME HERE ALIVE! TEAR AWAY THEIR LIVES AND MAKE THEM READY FOR TOMORROW!
GET BEHIND ME, DEAREST! THEY WON'T GET THOSE FOUL CLAWS ON YOU UNTIL I'M GONE!
CLOSE IN! PULL YOURSELVES TOGETHER AND GRAB THEM!
TRY IT, YOU BONY NIGHTMARES! COME AND GET US!

COME ON, DARLING! WE'LL TRY TO REACH OUR CAR!
THOSE HORRIBLE, HORRIBLE *THINGS!* WE MUST BE GOING MAD!
WE'LL NEVER MAKE IT! THAT CREATURE IS SIGNALLING TO OTHERS WITH THAT WHISTLE!
KEEP RUNNING! I'LL FIGHT UNTIL THEY OVERWHELM ME! YOU TRY TO REACH THE CAR AND GET AWAY, BACK UP THE ROAD WE CAME IN ON!
SHREEE
EEEK! WE'RE DOOMED! THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF THEM!
CLOSE IN ON THEM! THE MASTER WILL PUNISH US ALL IF THEIR SOULS ESCAPE NOW!
THEN WITHOUT WARNING..
ANOTHER VISITOR! STOP HIM QUICKLY!
THIS MAY BE OUR CHANCE, BETTY! BREAK FOR THE CAR!
DON'T LET HIM GET OUT LIKE THE OTHERS! SEE WHO HE IS! HOLD HIM!
WE'LL MAKE IT! JUMP IN AND HANG ON FOR DEAR LIFE!
WE MADE IT! I'LL TRY TO SWING AROUND THE BLOCK AND GET BACK ON THE ROAD!
THEY'RE ESCAPING! STOP THEM!
WE'RE GOING THROUGH .. EVEN IF A HUNDRED GET IN THE WAY!
NEVER MIND THEM! *THIS* IS THE *JOHN* DRAKE WE WERE SENT TO MEET!

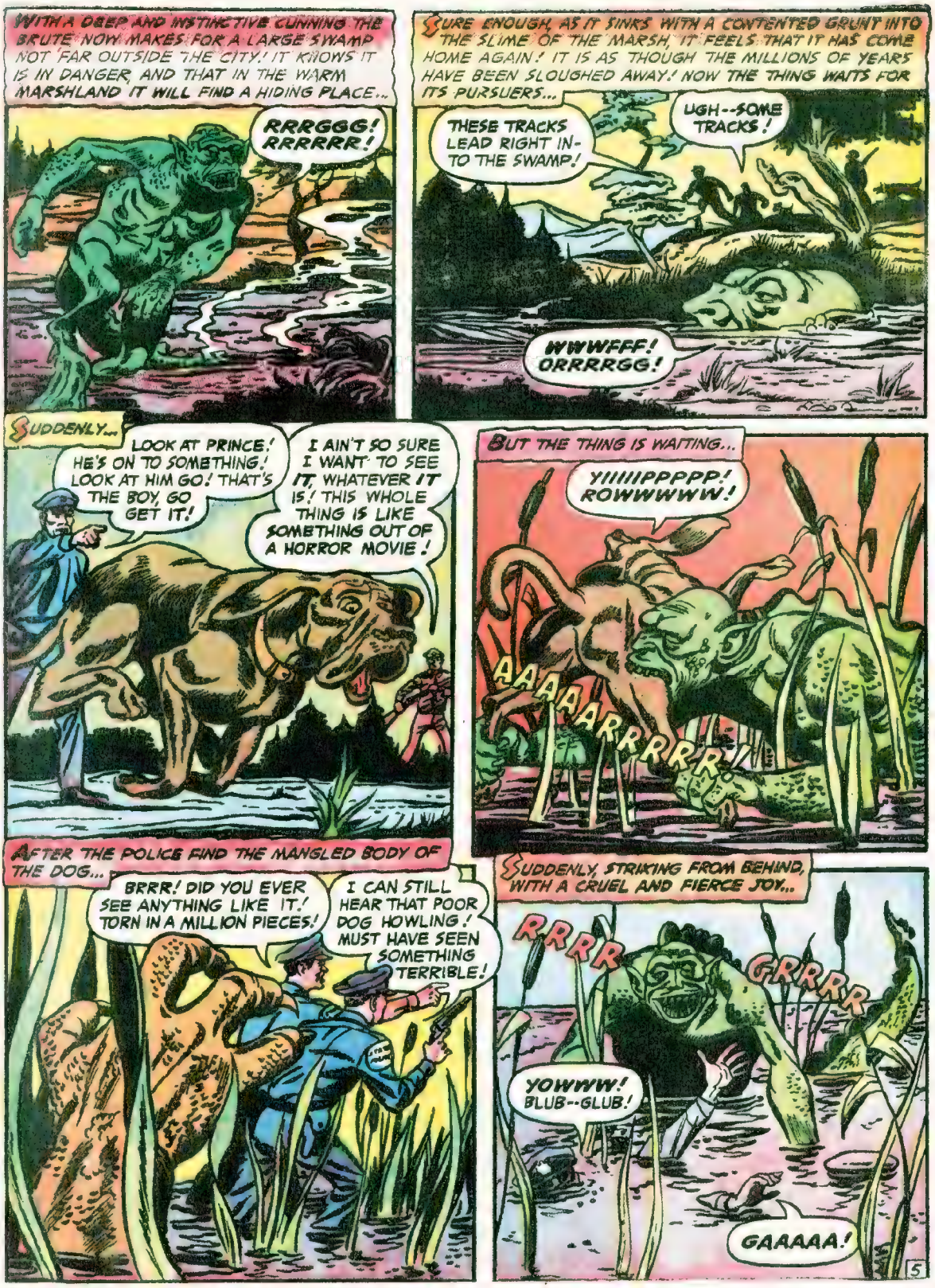
LET THEM GO! WE'LL PICK THEM UP LATER, WHEN THE TIME IS RIPE!
FASTER, JIM.. FASTER! WE'RE ESCAPING!
WE MADE IT! HERE'S THE MAIN HIGHWAY OUTSIDE THE FRIGHTFUL VALLEY!
THERE'S THE STATE TROOPER AND THAT FARMER SIGNALLING US TO STOP!
WELL YOU CAN'T SAY I DIDN'T WARN YOU FOLKS! I BET YOU HAD A RIGHT HARROWIN' EXPERIENCE, THE WAY YOU LOOK!
STOP IT, PETE! DON'T SCARE THESE FOLKS ANY WORSE THAN THEY'VE ALREADY BEEN SCARED!
PERDITION VALLEY GIVES OFF SOME KIND OF NATURAL GAS AT NIGHT, WHEN THE ROCKS COOL AND OPEN UP, FOLKS! THE GAS GIVES ALL KINDS OF WEIRD VISIONS! FOLKS HEREABOUTS STAY AWAY AFTER DARK!
JUST FOLLOW THE MAIN HIGHWAY TO TOWN, FRIENDS, AND FORGET ANY HALLUCINATIONS YOU HAD IN THERE!
BOY WILL WE OBEY THAT ORDER OFFICER! THANKS A MILLION! WE WERE REALLY SCARED!
J-JIM! L-LOOK! THAT SHORTCUT WAS ON THIS MAP.. AND NOW IT'S DISAPPEARED! PERDITION VALLEY ISN'T EVEN MARKED HERE!
AWRRK! ARE YOU SURE? THAT'S THE MAP I GOT FROM THAT WRECK!
OFFICER, WHAT ABOUT THAT MAN WHO WAS HURT IN THE WRECK?
HE DIED ABOUT TEN MINUTES AGO, FOLKS! THE DOCTOR SAID BY ALL THE RULES, HE SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ALIVE FOR THE LAST HOUR!
BUT DON'T WORRY HE WAS A BAD CHARACTER NOBODY'LL MISS! MAYBE YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT JOHN DRAKE THE RACKETEER!


DRAGON EGG!
IN THE DIM, LOST BEGINNING OF THE WORLD THERE LIVED SUCH HORRORS AS TODAY EXIST ONLY IN NIGHTMARES! TERRIBLE GIANT BRUTES WHO ROAMED THE PRE-HISTORIC SWAMPS, DEVOURING EACH OTHER, RENDING WITH CRUEL JAWS ANYTHING THAT DARED TO STAND AGAINST THEM! THEN THE WORLD CHANGED AND THE AWFUL BEASTS DIED OUT! TOTAL EXTINCTION WAS THEIR FATE--SO THE SCIENTISTS TOLD US! BUT ONE THING DID NOT DIE! ONE SMALL EGG--THE HORROR THAT HATCHED...
IT MAY HAVE STARTED LIKE THIS--TWO GROTESQUE CREATURES OF THAT WEIRD TWILIGHT WORLD LOCKED IN A FIERCE BATTLE TO THE DEATH! A FEMALE PROTECTS HER EGGS FROM A HUNGRY ENEMY...
GRRRRR!
RRRRRR
BOTH OF THE BRUTES GASP OUT THEIR LIVES IN THE SLIME! THE EGGS, LEFT UNTENDED, DIE OR ARE EATEN BY THE OTHER DENIZENS OF THE PRIMEVAL WILDERNESS! ALL EXCEPT ONE EGG, WHICH SOMEHOW ESCAPES...

Fantastic Fears #7, May-June 1954. Artist unknown.

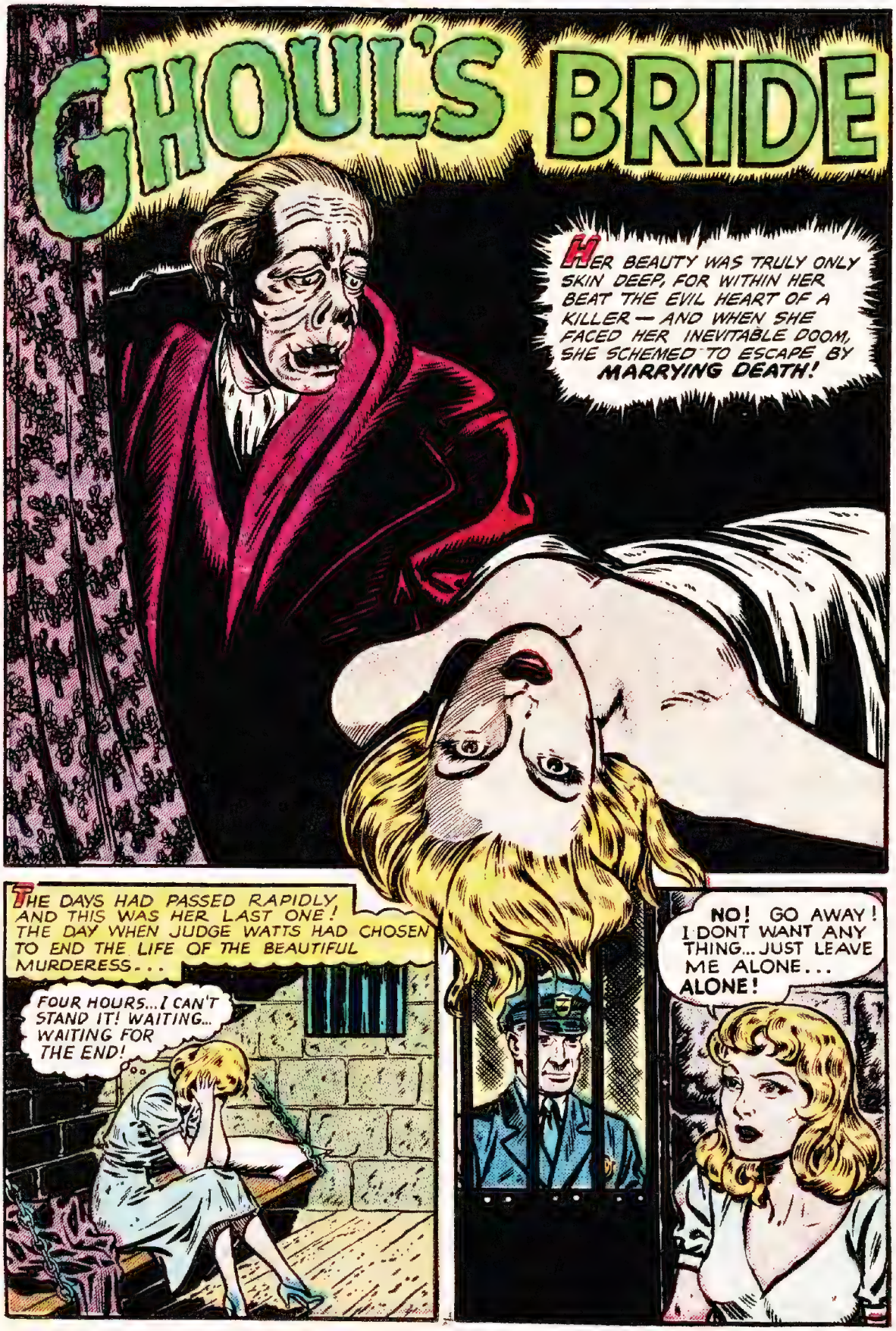
NOW EONS PASS AND THE ICE COMES, THEN SLOWLY RECEDES! THE EGG, DORMANT, PROTECTED THROUGH THE CENTURIES BY A CASING OF SWAMP MUD, IS FOUND BY MEN AT LAST...
WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT, SMITH? A DINOSAUR EGG?
NO, TOO SMALL! BUT IT'S OLD! VERY AMAZING FIND, SIR! MIGHT BE A BRONTOSAURUS!
THE EGG ENDS UP IN A MUSEUM IN A LARGE CITY...
WOW! HOW'D YOU LIKE TO HAVE THAT WITH YOUR HAM FOR BREAKFAST?
HEY, KIDS, COME AND LOOK AT THE BIG EGG! IS IT A WHOPPER!
WILBUR-- THE VERY IDEA!
MONTHS PASS AND BITTER WEATHER GRIPS THE CITY! ONE NIGHT THE MUSEUM WATCHMAN TURNS UP THE THERMOSTAT...
NEVER TURNED IT UP SO HIGH BEFORE, BUT IT'S BELOW ZERO OUT TONIGHT! GOT TO KEEP THIS PLACE WARM!
AN HOUR PASSES AND FROM THE EGG THERE COMES A STRANGE SOUND! A SINISTER, STEALTHY, CRACKING SOUND! THEN SUDDENLY...
CRACK
CRACK
ARRR! GUUUU-- RRRR!
AND A THING IS BORN! TWISTED, GROTESQUE, HORRIBLE, ITS BODY SOMEHOW WARPED BY THE CENTURIES INTO SOMETHING HALF BEAST, HALF HUMAN...
OVUM PREHIST. FOUND AT MT BOGAR
STILL WET FROM THE EGG, THE MONSTER FROM ANOTHER TIME AND ANOTHER WORLD PROWLS THE DARK CORRIDORS OF THE MUSEUM! ITS BRAIN IS TINY, HELPLESS, BUT INSTINCT RULES IT AND IT IS HUNGRY...
RRRRRR! AWGG!
THEN IT SEES THE PREY AND STRIKES WITH A FURY OUT OF THE AGES! WITH SLAVERING JAWS AND CRUEL TALONS IT TEARS THE WATCHMAN TO PIECES...
AAHHH!
EEEEEE
RRRR-- GRRRR!
2

ITS IMMEDIATE HUNGER IS APPEASED, BUT IN THE STUNTED BRAIN OF THE BEAST FROM BEYOND THERE IS STILL A VAGUE YEARNING! IT HEADS FOR A GRAVEYARD...
ARRR-GUUU!
THE ANCESTORS OF THE BRUTE WERE CARRION EATERS! NOW, SOMEHOW, IT WANTS THE SAME FOOD! OLD BONES, DECAYING FLESH! THAT IS THE TRUE FOOD OF THIS HORROR...
GRRRR-OWRRRRR!
AND SO A CARETAKER FINDS IT, MUNCHING CONTENTEDLY ON AN OLD BONE...
ARRGG?
YIIEEEEE! W-WHAT IS IT! EATING B-BONES, TEARING UP THE GRAVES! EATING B-BODIES, TOO! I GOT TO CALL THE COPS!
I TELL YA I SAW IT! WITH MY OWN EYES! NO, I AIN'T BEEN DRINKING, I TELL YA! SOME KIND OF A TERRIBLE ANIMAL, TEARING UP ALL THE GRAVES! SORT OF LIKE A DRAGON!
YOU BETTER GO SLEEP IT OFF!
THE BRUTE, SENSING DANGER TO ITSELF, FOLLOWS THE CARETAKER! NOW, WITH RED GAPING JAWS...
IT'S AFTER ME! HELP! OHHHH! HELP ME! IT'S GOING TO KILL ME! YOWWWW!
ARRRR!
WHAT IS IT, PETE? SOUNDS LIKE SOMEBODY BEING MURDERED, EVEN OVER THE PHONE!
I THOUGHT IT WAS A DRUNK-- NOW I AIN'T SO SURE! WE BETTER GO TAKE A LOOK!
HELP! OWWW!
NOW THE HOURS OF THE BRUTE THING ARE NUMBERED, BUT IT DOES NOT KNOW OR CARE! IT VANISHES INTO THE NIGHT AS THE POLICE CLOSE IN ON THE GRAVEYARD AND FIND THE DISMEMBERED BODY OF THE WATCHMAN...
UGH! I'VE SEEN BODIES BEFORE, BUT THAT ONE! I FEEL SICK!
ME TOO! BUT WHAT COULD DO THAT TO A MAN?
POLICE
3


WITH A DEEP AND INSTINCTIVE CUNNING THE BRUTE NOW MAKES FOR A LARGE SWAMP NOT FAR OUTSIDE THE CITY! IT KNOWS IT IS IN DANGER, AND THAT IN THE WARM MARSHLAND IT WILL FIND A HIDING PLACE...
RRRGGG! RRRRRR!
SURE ENOUGH, AS IT SINKS WITH A CONTENTED GRUNT INTO THE SLIME OF THE MARSH, IT FEELS THAT IT HAS COME HOME AGAIN! IT IS AS THOUGH THE MILLIONS OF YEARS HAVE BEEN SLOUGHED AWAY! NOW THE THING WAITS FOR ITS PURSUERS...
THESE TRACKS LEAD RIGHT IN-TO THE SWAMP!
UGH--SOME TRACKS!
WWWFFF! ORRRRGG!
SUDDENLY...
LOOK AT PRINCE! HE'S ON TO SOMETHING! LOOK AT HIM GO! THAT'S THE BOY, GO GET IT!
I AIN'T SO SURE I WANT TO SEE IT, WHATEVER IT IS! THIS WHOLE THING IS LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF A HORROR MOVIE!
BUT THE THING IS WAITING...
YIIIIIPPPPP! ROWWWWW!
AAAAARRRRRR!
AFTER THE POLICE FIND THE MANGLED BODY OF THE DOG...
BRRR! DID YOU EVER SEE ANYTHING LIKE IT! TORN IN A MILLION PIECES!
I CAN STILL HEAR THAT POOR DOG HOWLING! MUST HAVE SEEN SOMETHING TERRIBLE!
SUDDENLY, STRIKING FROM BEHIND, WITH A CRUEL AND FIERCE JOY...
RRRR
GRRRRR
YOWWW! BLUB--GLUB!
GAAAAA!
5

BUT THE BEAST FROM YESTERDAY IS LOOSE NOW, SPREADING TERROR IN THE CITY, BUSY EXPLORING THE TEEMING METROPOLIS FULL OF PUNY CREATURES WHICH IT CANNOT UNDERSTAND, BUT INSTINCTIVELY HOLDS IN CONTEMPT..
ARRRRRRR- GRORRRR-
UNTIL AT LAST IT PEERS INTO A WINDOW AND SEES ONE OF THE CREATURES! IT IS NO LONGER HUNGRY, BUT HERE IS SOMETHING ON WHICH TO VENT ITS FEAR AND RAGE...
WONDER WHAT ALL THE EXCITEMENT IS ABOUT? I HEAR SIRENS!
SUDDENLY THE BRUTE CRASHES THROUGH THE WINDOW AS IF IT WERE PAPER..
EEEEEEEE-
GOWRRRRRRR-
LATER, WITH ITS FEAR-CRAZED VICTIM, IT IS TRACKED DOWN AND PINPOINTED BY THE SPOTLIGHTS OF THE BAFFLED POLICE...
DON'T HARM THAT GIRL, WHATEVER YOU ARE! LET HER GO! SURRENDER YOURSELF!
DON'T BE A DOPE, McCANN! THAT THING CAN'T UNDERSTAND YOU!
HOWLING WITH RAGE, GNASHING ITS TEETH AT ITS TORMENTORS, THE BRUTE-BEAST HURLS THE HELPLESS GIRL AT THE GAPING CROWD...
MY HEAVENS! THAT POOR GIRL...
EEEEEEEE-
RRRRRRRR-
WATCH OUT! GET BACK!
HORRIBLE!
AN ENRAGED COP POURS FUTILE BULLETS AFTER THE FLEEING MONSTER, BUT TOO LATE! IT DISAPPEARS ONCE MORE INTO THE GLOOM...
THAT SLIMY MURDERING THING FROM HADES! BULLETS DON'T EVEN BOTHER IT!
CALL AN AMBULANCE, SOMEBODY! TAKE THIS BODY TO THE MORGUE!
4

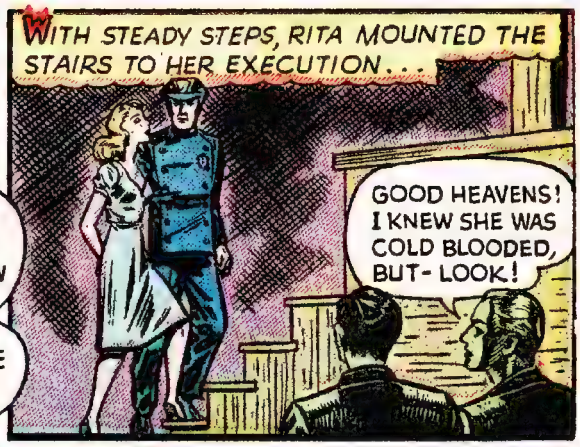
HOURS PASS WHILE THE THING RANGES THE SWAMP, BLOODILY FRUSTRATING EVERY EFFORT TO DESTROY IT! AFTER TEN MEN HAVE DIED HORRIBLY THE NATIONAL GUARD IS CALLED OUT...
EASY DOES IT, BOYS! WE WANT TO BLOW THAT MONSTER UP, NOT OURSELVES!
HURRY UP, YOU MEN! AT LAST REPORT IT WAS HEADING THIS WAY!
NOW SOMETHING WHISPERS IN THE BRAIN OF THE BEAST AND IT COMES TO THE SURFACE, EMERGING FROM THE SLIME TO FIGHT ITS LAST...
YAAAAA! LOOK! THERE IT IS!
B-BUT WHAT IS IT?
WITH A TERRIBLE ROAR THE SLIME COVERED BRUTE CHARGES THE FRIGHTENED GUARDSMEN...
B-BULLETS WON'T STOP IT!
YAWRRRR
LEMME OUT OF THIS!
WON'T ANYTHING STOP IT?
A TRAP WAS SET, BUT AT THE LAST MOMENT...
HELP! OWWW!
YAAAAA!
S-SOMETHING WENT WRONG! THE CHARGE WON'T FIRE!
BUT THE SPARK TAKES AT LAST, TRAVELING ALONG THE DAMP WIRE TO WHERE THE THING IS STILL TEARING AND RENDING AND KILLING...
YARRRRR!
BLAM!
LATER...
DEAD AT LAST! BUT WHAT ON EARTH WAS IT, SIR?
I DON'T KNOW! I DOUBT IF ANYONE DOES KNOW! ANYWAY IT'S OVER NOW!
OVER? HOW THE DEAD BRUTE WOULD LAUGH IF IT COULD! IT HAS DONE ITS WORK--- BECAUSE IT WAS A FEMALE --AND SOMEWHERE IN THE SWAMP IS---ANOTHER EGG!!!

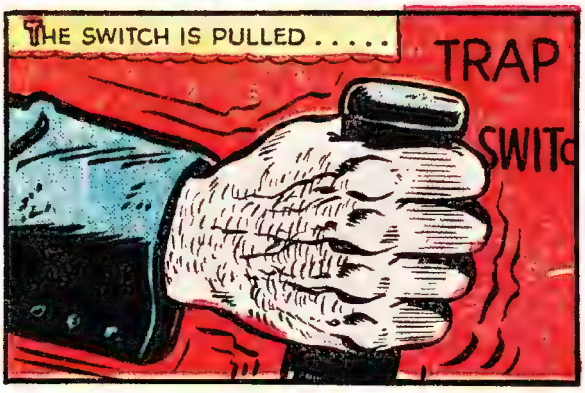

GHOUL'S BRIDE
HER BEAUTY WAS TRULY ONLY SKIN DEEP, FOR WITHIN HER BEAT THE EVIL HEART OF A KILLER — AND WHEN SHE FACED HER INEVITABLE DOOM, SHE SCHEMED TO ESCAPE BY MARRYING DEATH!
THE DAYS HAD PASSED RAPIDLY AND THIS WAS HER LAST ONE! THE DAY WHEN JUDGE WATTS HAD CHOSEN TO END THE LIFE OF THE BEAUTIFUL MURDERESS...
FOUR HOURS... I CAN'T STAND IT! WAITING... WAITING FOR THE END!
NO! GO AWAY! I DONT WANT ANY THING... JUST LEAVE ME ALONE... ALONE!

Voodoo #6, February 1956. Artist: Jerry Iger shop

LAST REQUESTS—HAH! THE ONLY THING I WANTED, THEY WOULDN'T GIVE ME...JUST TWO MINUTES ALONE WITH THAT FAT PIG OF A GOVERNOR! NO PARDON— OH—IF I ONLY...
SUDDENLY, AS IF FROM NOWHERE, THIN WISPS OF VAPOR BEGAN TO FORM IN RITA'S CELL...
SMOKE?—THERE'S NO FIRE IN HERE!
FEAR ME NOT, MY SWEET, I'VE COME FAR TO SEE YOU!
IT IS A SMALL THING I BRING YOU...LIFE! LIFE TO SPEND AT MY SIDE!
W-WHAT! WITH YOU?
HERE....IN THIS VIAL! DRINK IT—AND YOU MAY MOUNT THE SCAFFOLD WITHOUT FEAR... DEATH WILL NOT TOUCH YOU!
I DON'T KNOW WHO OR WHAT HE IS...BUT IF ANYTHING CAN STOP THEM...I'LL TRY IT... HERE GOES!
2

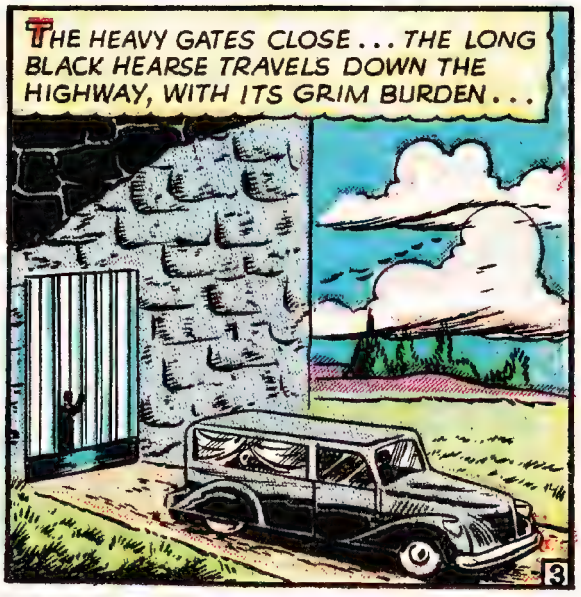
GOOD! REMEMBER, MY DEAR ONE—THIS TIME TOMORROW YOU SHALL BE MY BRIDE.... THAT IS MY PRICE AND YOU MUST PAY IT!


WITH STEADY STEPS, RITA MOUNTED THE STAIRS TO HER EXECUTION...
GOOD HEAVENS! I KNEW SHE WAS COLD BLOODED, BUT- LOOK!


THE SWITCH IS PULLED.....
TRAP
SWITC

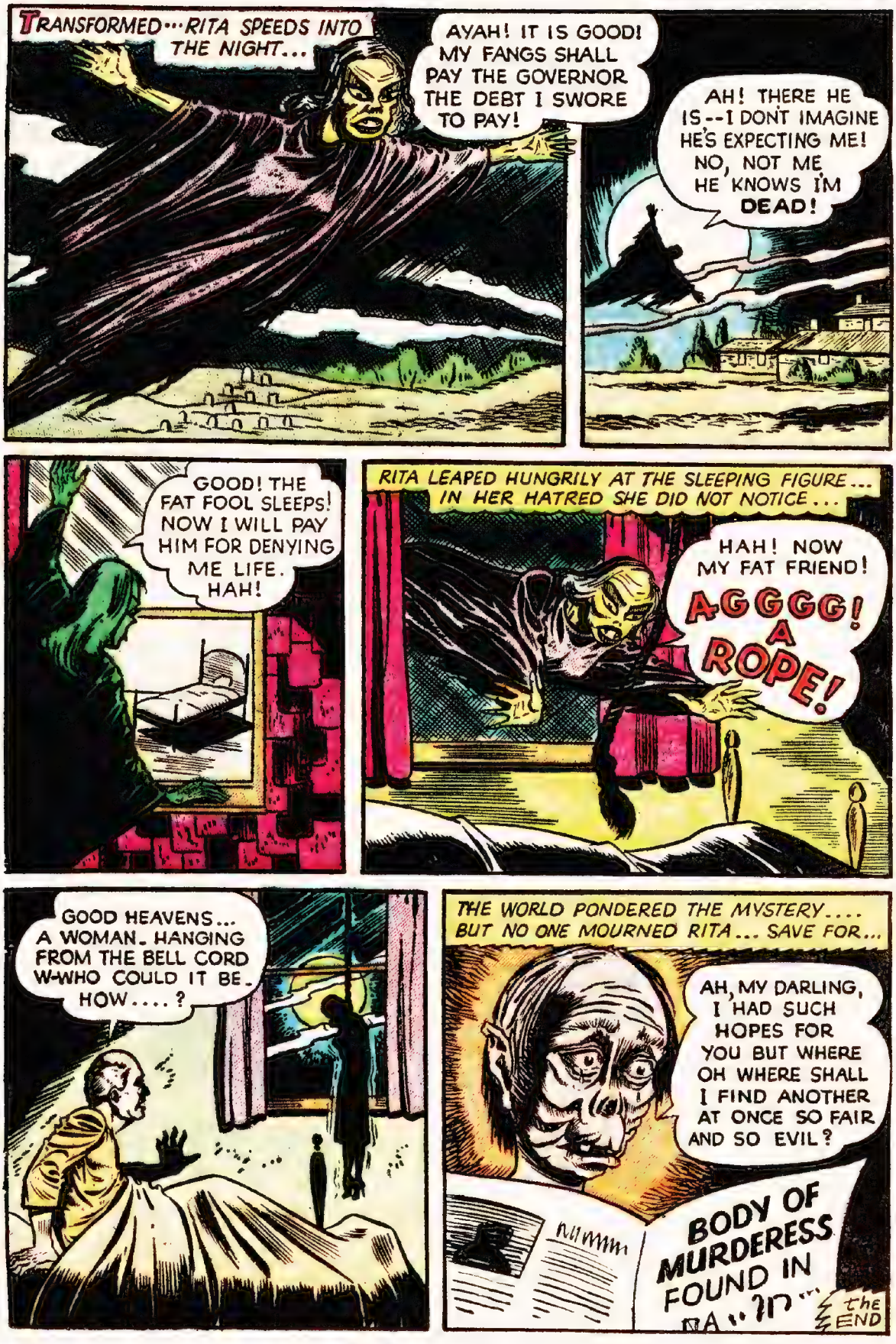
A QUICK SNAP... A MOMENT'S PLUNGE -- THEN SILENCE.. THE COILS OF A ROPE HAVE CLAIMED THE DEBT THAT RITA OWED...

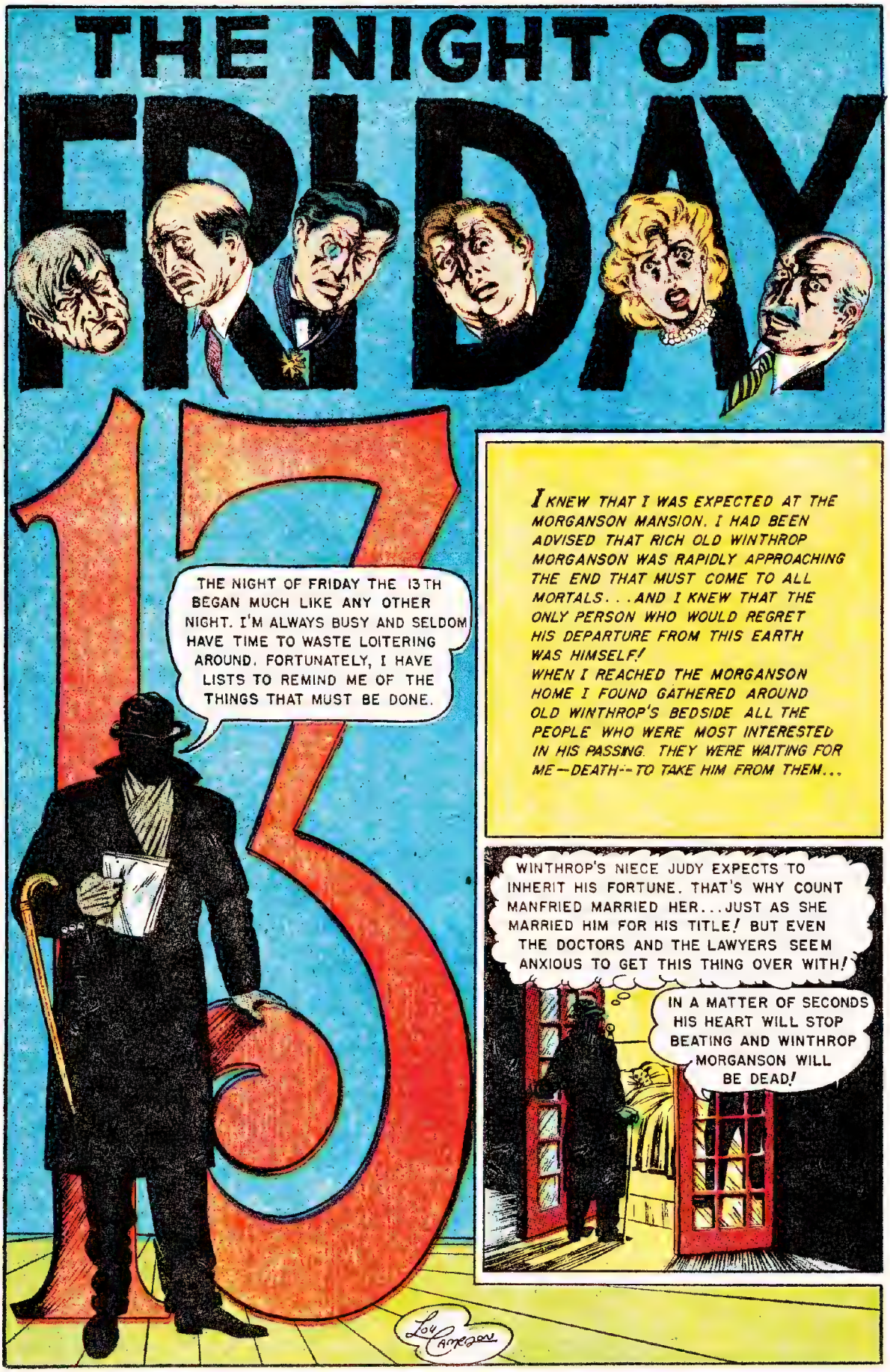
THAT AFTERNOON....
IS MY SISTER READY NOW, SIR?
HERE ARE THE PERMITS...YOU MAY TAKE THE UH--BODY AT ONCE!


THE HEAVY GATES CLOSE... THE LONG BLACK HEARSE TRAVELS DOWN THE HIGHWAY, WITH ITS GRIM BURDEN...

AT LAST! MY PRIZE! SOON YOU SHALL BE MINE--AND WE MAY SPEND THE LONG YEARS OF ETERNITY TOGETHER
NOW TO PREPARE! THE ANCIENT FORMULA HAS NEVER FAILED. GRANT THAT IT HAS NOT LOST ITS POWER!
YES--SOON NOW!— SOON HER LOVLINESS SHALL BE PRESERVED FOREVER!
SUCCESS! SHE WAKES! SHE IS ALIVE... OH ANCIENT MASTERS OF THE DARKNESS, I THANK THEE!
WHERE AM I ?
WITH ONE WHO LOVES YOU, RITA.. AND YOU ARE SAFE THEY CAN NEVER HARM YOU AGAIN
NO!-- LET ME GO! I WANT NO PART OF YOU ... MONSTER!
4

OH-H-H! B-BUT THIS IS A CEMETERY! I'M TRAPPED--BUT HOW DID I GET HERE--WHAT HAPPENED?
I BROUGHT YOU MY DEAR--AFTER "AHEM" AFTER THEY HUNG YOU--IT WAS REALLY QUITE TOUCHING! YOU WERE SO LOVELY!
LET ME GO!-I WON'T HAVE YOU TOUCH ME... YOU-YOU GHOUL!
YES... A GHOUL, AM I!
BUT, YOU MY SWEET---CAN YOU NOT FEEL THE POWER IN YOU--THE POWER OF THE UNDEAD?
E-E-YAAH-H-H-H!
YES, MY DEAR --- YOU ARE SAFE AGAINST ALL FORMS OF DEATH, BUT THE ONE THAT FIRST DESTROYED YOU... THE ROPE!


TRANSFORMED···RITA SPEEDS INTO THE NIGHT...
AYAH! IT IS GOOD! MY FANGS SHALL PAY THE GOVERNOR THE DEBT I SWORE TO PAY!
AH! THERE HE IS--I DONT IMAGINE HE'S EXPECTING ME! NO, NOT ME HE KNOWS I'M DEAD!
GOOD! THE FAT FOOL SLEEPS! NOW I WILL PAY HIM FOR DENYING ME LIFE. HAH!
RITA LEAPED HUNGRILY AT THE SLEEPING FIGURE... IN HER HATRED SHE DID NOT NOTICE...
HAH! NOW MY FAT FRIEND!
AGGGG! A ROPE!
GOOD HEAVENS... A WOMAN. HANGING FROM THE BELL CORD W-WHO COULD IT BE. HOW....?
THE WORLD PONDERED THE MYSTERY.... BUT NO ONE MOURNED RITA... SAVE FOR...
AH, MY DARLING, I HAD SUCH HOPES FOR YOU BUT WHERE OH WHERE SHALL I FIND ANOTHER AT ONCE SO FAIR AND SO EVIL?
Mmmm
BODY OF MURDERESS FOUND IN
the END

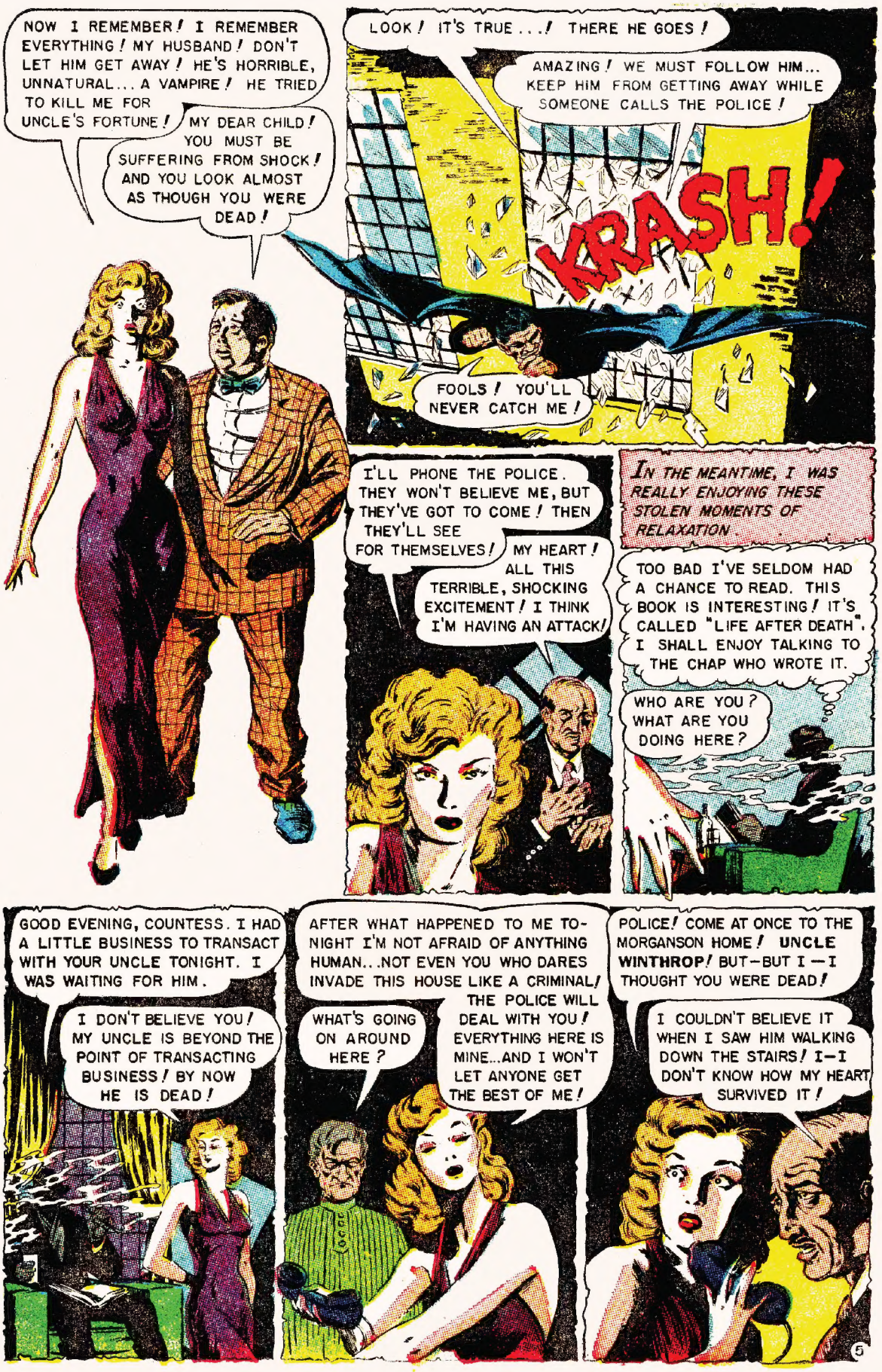

THE NIGHT OF
FRIDAY
13
THE NIGHT OF FRIDAY THE 13TH BEGAN MUCH LIKE ANY OTHER NIGHT. I'M ALWAYS BUSY AND SELDOM HAVE TIME TO WASTE LOITERING AROUND. FORTUNATELY, I HAVE LISTS TO REMIND ME OF THE THINGS THAT MUST BE DONE.
I KNEW THAT I WAS EXPECTED AT THE MORGANSON MANSION. I HAD BEEN ADVISED THAT RICH OLD WINTHROP MORGANSON WAS RAPIDLY APPROACHING THE END THAT MUST COME TO ALL MORTALS...AND I KNEW THAT THE ONLY PERSON WHO WOULD REGRET HIS DEPARTURE FROM THIS EARTH WAS HIMSELF!
WHEN I REACHED THE MORGANSON HOME I FOUND GATHERED AROUND OLD WINTHROP'S BEDSIDE ALL THE PEOPLE WHO WERE MOST INTERESTED IN HIS PASSING. THEY WERE WAITING FOR ME—DEATH--TO TAKE HIM FROM THEM...
WINTHROP'S NIECE JUDY EXPECTS TO INHERIT HIS FORTUNE. THAT'S WHY COUNT MANFRIED MARRIED HER...JUST AS SHE MARRIED HIM FOR HIS TITLE! BUT EVEN THE DOCTORS AND THE LAWYERS SEEM ANXIOUS TO GET THIS THING OVER WITH!
IN A MATTER OF SECONDS HIS HEART WILL STOP BEATING AND WINTHROP MORGANSON WILL BE DEAD!
Lou Cameron

The Hand of Fate #22, March 1954. Artist: Lou Cameron

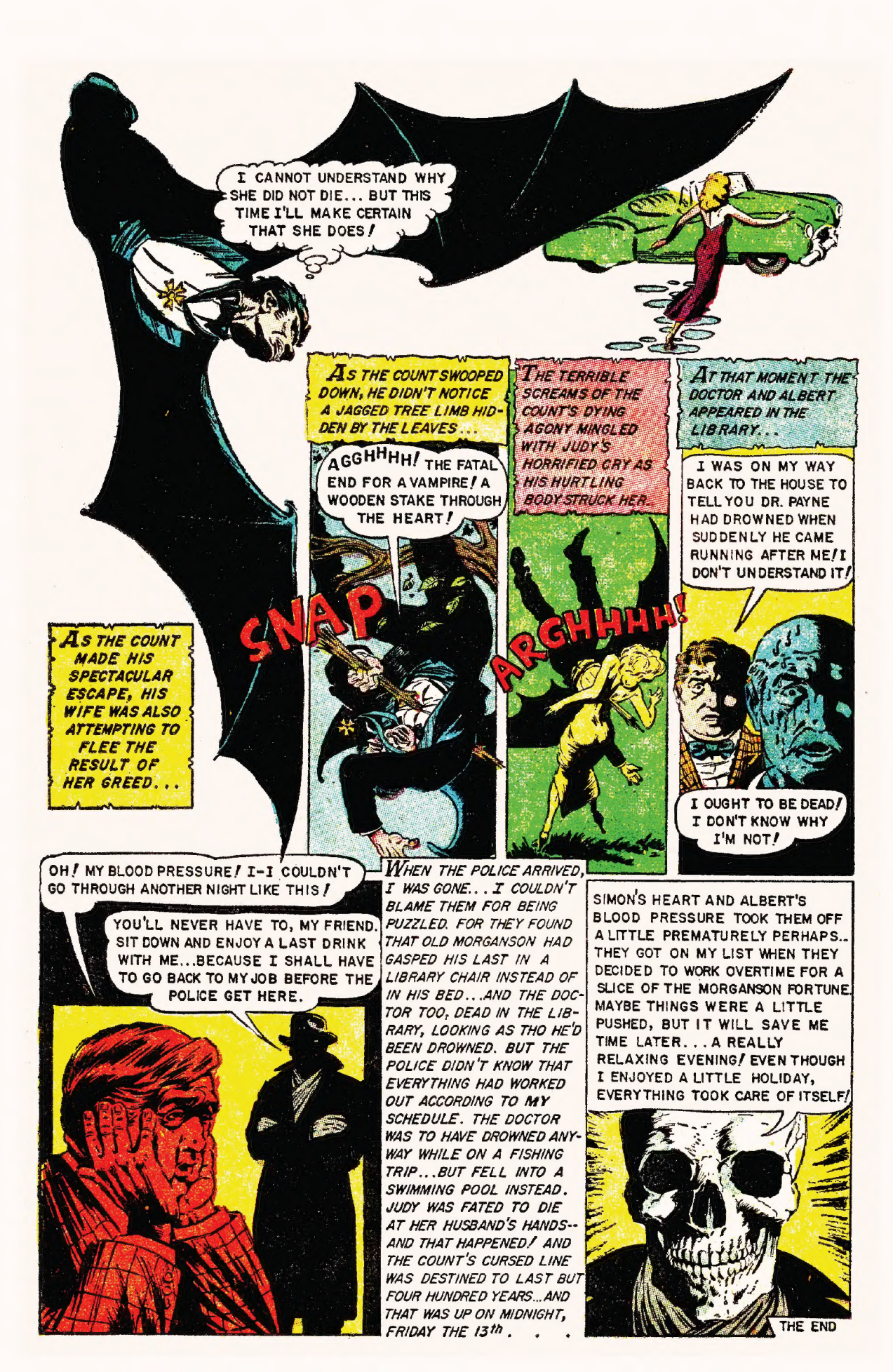
POOR WINTHROP DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO RELAX. IF HE HAD LISTENED TO ME HE COULD HAVE LIVED MANY MORE YEARS... BUT HE WOULDN'T STOP WORKING. HE HATED TO TAKE EVEN A FEW HOURS OFF TO ENJOY HIMSELF!
THAT'S TOO BAD! EVERYONE IS ENTITLED TO A FEW HOURS OFF.
THAT SHOULD BE A LESSON TO US, SIMON. WITH THE FEE THAT WE CAN COLLECT AS THE EXECUTORS OF WINTHROP'S ESTATE, WE OUGHT TO LEAVE RIGHT AFTER HIS DEATH!
RIGHT, ALBERT! A TOUR OR A CRUISE IS EXACTLY WHAT WE NEED. MY HEART HAS BEEN BAD FOR YEARS... BUT WINTHROP WAS ALWAYS WANTING SOMETHING AND WE COULD NEVER GET AWAY.
YOUR HEART AND MY BLOOD PRESSURE! I THOUGHT THE OLD FOOL WOULD NEVER DIE!
ALL THOSE VACATIONS UNCLE PASSED UP AND ALL THE HOURS HE DIDN'T TAKE OFF--THEY HELPED PILE UP MORE DOLLARS FOR US TO SPEND HAVING THE KIND OF FUN HE DISAPPROVED OF!
AND NO ONE SUSPECTS THAT THE ARSENIC WE ADDED TO HIS NIGHTLY MILK IS SENDING HIM ON A LONG VACATION INDEED! NOW HE'LL RELAX...IN HIS GRAVE!
AND YOU DO NOT SUSPECT, MY SILLY WIFE, THAT AS SOON AS HE IS DEAD, YOU TOO WILL DIE! WITH YOUR FORTUNE, I CAN REPAIR MY ANCESTRAL CASTLE AND LIVE IN GRAND STYLE!
I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT! WINTHROP HAD REACHED THE POINT OF DRAWING HIS LAST BREATH... AND YET, HE LINGERS----
EVEN THE DOCTOR IS ANXIOUS TO GET THINGS OVER AND GO ON A FISHING TRIP!
2

COME TO THINK OF IT, I'VE NEVER HAD ANY TIME OFF MYSELF. LIKE WINTHROP... I'VE ALWAYS BEEN TOO BUSY. IT MIGHT NOT BE A BAD IDEA TO SEE WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE! EVEN JUST A FEW HOURS OFF WOULD BE A CHANGE.
I'VE NEVER DONE ANYTHING LIKE THIS BEFORE—NEVER LET ANYTHING INTERFERE WITH BUSINESS... BUT MAYBE WINTHROP AND I BOTH DESERVE A FEW HOURS TO OURSELVES.
THIS IS GETTING MONOTONOUS! HE'S BOUND TO DIE ANY MINUTE! THERE'S NO SENSE STANDING AROUND HERE!
YOU'RE QUITE RIGHT, MY DEAR. THERE IS NO REASON FOR US TO WASTE ANY MORE TIME. NOTHING CAN POSSIBLY INTERFERE OR CHANGE THE ENDING NOW.
AS A MATTER OF FACT, I HAVE SEVERAL BITS OF BUSINESS ON MY LISTS THAT COULD ALL BE DONE TONIGHT WITHOUT CHANGING THINGS TOO MUCH. A FEW HOURS WON'T MAKE MUCH DIFFERENCE WHEN THE RESULTS ARE THE SAME.
I NEVER REALLY HAVE TIME TO LOOK AROUND THE PLACES I GO. THIS LOOKS LIKE A NICE PLACE TO RELAX. I'VE HEARD WINTHROP ALWAYS HAD THE BEST IN CIGARS AND LIQUOR...AND I MIGHT AS WELL SEE FOR MYSELF WHILE I'M WAITING FOR THINGS TO HAPPEN.
I HAD A RATHER GOOD IDEA OF WHAT WAS TAKING PLACE UPSTAIRS. . .
UNCLE IS PROBABLY DEAD THIS VERY MINUTE...AND THE MORGANSON MONEY IS MINE! IT'S ABOUT TIME!
YOU ARE SO RIGHT, DEAR JUDY! I COULD NOT HAVE WAITED MUCH LONGER!
IF YOU HADN'T BEEN SO ANXIOUS TO BECOME A COUNTESS AND HAD BOTHERED TO INVESTIGATE, YOU'D HAVE DISCOVERED THAT THE DONEELS ARE HEREDITARY VAMPIRES! FORTUNATELY FOR ME, YOU WERE NOT THAT BRIGHT!
NO! NO! THERE ARE NO SUCH THINGS! BUT—BUT YOU ARE! HELP! HELP!
3

I AM, INDEED! AND ALL THIS TIME I'VE HAD TO CONCEAL MY TRUE NATURE! I'VE HAD TO SNEAK OUT AT NIGHT--HIDE MY VICTIMS ...UNTIL FREEDOM WOULD AGAIN BE MINE!
EEEEEEEEEE
HEH HEH! THIS IS EVEN BETTER THAN I PLANNED! I HAD INTENDED TO TELL THEM THAT YOU WERE MURDERED BY A FIEND! BUT NOW THEY'LL SIMPLY THINK YOU SLIPPED, FELL DOWN THE STAIRS AND WERE KILLED!
THE FOOLS WILL FIGURE YOU CUT YOURSELF FALLING AND BLED TO DEATH! HEH HEH! YOU WERE A DUTIFUL WIFE, MY DEAR. NOT ONLY HAVE YOU GIVEN ME A FORTUNE ... BUT YOU'VE GIVEN ME YOUR LIFE'S BLOOD!
THEY WON'T KNOW I WAS ANYWHERE AROUND WHEN IT HAPPENED... AND WHEN THEY SEE ME AGAIN I'LL BE IN MY HUMAN FORM AND THEY'LL NEVER SUSPECT ME!
I KNEW I HEARD A SCREAM! IT-IT'S JUDY!
POOR CHILD! WATCHING HER UNCLE DIE MUST HAVE BEEN MORE THAN SHE COULD STAND! PERHAPS HER EYES WERE BLINDED WITH TEARS AND SHE DIDN'T SEE THE STAIRS!
DID I HEAR MY WIFE SCREAM? WHAT HAPPENED?
THEN... STRANGELY ENOUGH...
I-I FEEL SO FUNNY! WHERE AM I? WHAT HAPPENED? I MUST HAVE BEEN HAVING A DREADFUL NIGHTMARE!
WHAT INCREDIBLE THING IS THIS?! SHE CAN'T BE ALIVE! NO HUMAN BEING CAN LIVE WITH EVERY DROP OF BLOOD DRAINED FROM THE BODY!
4


NOW I REMEMBER! I REMEMBER EVERYTHING! MY HUSBAND! DON'T LET HIM GET AWAY! HE'S HORRIBLE, UNNATURAL... A VAMPIRE! HE TRIED TO KILL ME FOR UNCLE'S FORTUNE!
MY DEAR CHILD! YOU MUST BE SUFFERING FROM SHOCK! AND YOU LOOK ALMOST AS THOUGH YOU WERE DEAD!
LOOK! IT'S TRUE...! THERE HE GOES!
AMAZING! WE MUST FOLLOW HIM... KEEP HIM FROM GETTING AWAY WHILE SOMEONE CALLS THE POLICE!
KRASH!
FOOLS! YOU'LL NEVER CATCH ME!
I'LL PHONE THE POLICE. THEY WON'T BELIEVE ME, BUT THEY'VE GOT TO COME! THEN THEY'LL SEE FOR THEMSELVES!
MY HEART! ALL THIS TERRIBLE, SHOCKING EXCITEMENT! I THINK I'M HAVING AN ATTACK!
IN THE MEANTIME, I WAS REALLY ENJOYING THESE STOLEN MOMENTS OF RELAXATION
TOO BAD I'VE SELDOM HAD A CHANCE TO READ. THIS BOOK IS INTERESTING! IT'S CALLED "LIFE AFTER DEATH". I SHALL ENJOY TALKING TO THE CHAP WHO WROTE IT.
WHO ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
GOOD EVENING, COUNTESS. I HAD A LITTLE BUSINESS TO TRANSACT WITH YOUR UNCLE TONIGHT. I WAS WAITING FOR HIM.
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU! MY UNCLE IS BEYOND THE POINT OF TRANSACTING BUSINESS! BY NOW HE IS DEAD!
AFTER WHAT HAPPENED TO ME TONIGHT I'M NOT AFRAID OF ANYTHING HUMAN...NOT EVEN YOU WHO DARES INVADE THIS HOUSE LIKE A CRIMINAL!
WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND HERE?
THE POLICE WILL DEAL WITH YOU! EVERYTHING HERE IS MINE...AND I WON'T LET ANYONE GET THE BEST OF ME!
POLICE! COME AT ONCE TO THE MORGANSON HOME! UNCLE WINTHROP! BUT—BUT I—I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD!
I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT WHEN I SAW HIM WALKING DOWN THE STAIRS! I—I DON'T KNOW HOW MY HEART SURVIVED IT!

HA HA! FOOLED YOU ALL, DIDN'T I? FOOLED MYSELF, TOO. THOUGHT SURE I HAD REACHED THE END. NOT A BAD FEELING...EXCEPT I COULD HEAR EVERYTHING AND KNEW HOW ANXIOUS YOU WERE TO GET RID OF ME!
IN FACT MY DEAR NIECE...SO ANXIOUS THAT YOU AND YOUR COUNT DECIDED TO HURRY THINGS ALONG BY POISONING ME! I HEARD YOU TALKING! I WISHED I COULD HAVE A HALF HOUR LONGER ON EARTH JUST TO SEE PUNISHMENT METED OUT TO YOU BOTH. AND I GOT MY WISH!
AND WHO ARE YOU? I SEEM TO KNOW YOU...BUT IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE BEEN HAVING A GOOD TIME HERE IN MY LIBRARY, READING MY BOOKS, DRINKING MY LIQUOR AND SMOKING MY CIGARS!
UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D MIND.
NO, I DON'T MIND. IT'S FUNNY, BECAUSE ORDINARILY I WOULDN'T PUT UP WITH IT! BUT WHEN I THOUGHT I WAS DYING I BEGAN TO WISH I'D SPENT MORE TIME HERE MYSELF...JUST SITTING AND READING AND THINKING... I NEVER TOOK TIME TO THINK ABOUT ANYTHING BUT PILING UP MONEY!
NO REASON WHY WE SHOULDN'T BOTH SIT FOR A FEW MINUTES, MR. MORGANSON. IN FACT, THAT'S WHY I WAITED. AND I'M SURE MR. MORGANSON WOULD BE HAPPY TO HAVE YOU JOIN US, SIMON.
WHILE THE THREE OF US SAT COMFORTABLY IN THE LIBRARY, THE DOCTOR AND LAWYER WERE PURSUING THE COUNT OUTSIDE...
THERE HE GOES! I—I HOPE THE POLICE ARE ON THE WAY!
WATCH OUT, DOCTOR! THAT'S THE DEEP END OF THE SWIMMING POOL!
I—I TOLD YOU TO WATCH! I CAN'T SWIM! THIS—THIS EXCITEMENT IS TERRIBLE FOR MY HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE!
SPLASH
HEH HEH! DID THOSE FOOLS THINK THE LAST OF THE FABULOUS VAMPIRES OF DONEEL COULD BE SNUFFED OUT THROUGH THEIR PUNY EFFORTS!


I CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHY SHE DID NOT DIE... BUT THIS TIME I'LL MAKE CERTAIN THAT SHE DOES!
AS THE COUNT SWOOPED DOWN, HE DIDN'T NOTICE A JAGGED TREE LIMB HIDDEN BY THE LEAVES...
AGGHHHH! THE FATAL END FOR A VAMPIRE! A WOODEN STAKE THROUGH THE HEART!
SNAP
THE TERRIBLE SCREAMS OF THE COUNT'S DYING AGONY MINGLED WITH JUDY'S HORRIFIED CRY AS HIS HURTLING BODY STRUCK HER.
ARGHHHH!
AT THAT MOMENT THE DOCTOR AND ALBERT APPEARED IN THE LIBRARY...
I WAS ON MY WAY BACK TO THE HOUSE TO TELL YOU DR. PAYNE HAD DROWNED WHEN SUDDENLY HE CAME RUNNING AFTER ME! I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT!
I OUGHT TO BE DEAD! I DON'T KNOW WHY I'M NOT!
AS THE COUNT MADE HIS SPECTACULAR ESCAPE, HIS WIFE WAS ALSO ATTEMPTING TO FLEE THE RESULT OF HER GREED...
OH! MY BLOOD PRESSURE! I-I COULDN'T GO THROUGH ANOTHER NIGHT LIKE THIS!
YOU'LL NEVER HAVE TO, MY FRIEND. SIT DOWN AND ENJOY A LAST DRINK WITH ME...BECAUSE I SHALL HAVE TO GO BACK TO MY JOB BEFORE THE POLICE GET HERE.
WHEN THE POLICE ARRIVED, I WAS GONE... I COULDN'T BLAME THEM FOR BEING PUZZLED. FOR THEY FOUND THAT OLD MORGANSON HAD GASPED HIS LAST IN A LIBRARY CHAIR INSTEAD OF IN HIS BED...AND THE DOCTOR TOO, DEAD IN THE LIBRARY, LOOKING AS THO HE'D BEEN DROWNED. BUT THE POLICE DIDN'T KNOW THAT EVERYTHING HAD WORKED OUT ACCORDING TO MY SCHEDULE. THE DOCTOR WAS TO HAVE DROWNED ANYWAY WHILE ON A FISHING TRIP...BUT FELL INTO A SWIMMING POOL INSTEAD. JUDY WAS FATED TO DIE AT HER HUSBAND'S HANDS--AND THAT HAPPENED! AND THE COUNT'S CURSED LINE WAS DESTINED TO LAST BUT FOUR HUNDRED YEARS...AND THAT WAS UP ON MIDNIGHT, FRIDAY THE 13th . . .
SIMON'S HEART AND ALBERT'S BLOOD PRESSURE TOOK THEM OFF A LITTLE PREMATURELY PERHAPS.. THEY GOT ON MY LIST WHEN THEY DECIDED TO WORK OVERTIME FOR A SLICE OF THE MORGANSON FORTUNE. MAYBE THINGS WERE A LITTLE PUSHED, BUT IT WILL SAVE ME TIME LATER... A REALLY RELAXING EVENING! EVEN THOUGH I ENJOYED A LITTLE HOLIDAY, EVERYTHING TOOK CARE OF ITSELF!
THE END